

KASHMIR IN FLAMES

[An Untold Story of Kashmir's Political Affairs]

Bat
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ALI MOHAMMAD & SONS
Srinagar—KASHMIR

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THE BOOK

The Book 'KASHMIR IN FLAMES' is based on the records of important events, developments and happenings that have taken place at the two sides of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir between 1947 and 1977.

The 30 years period from 1947 to 1977 is the most important and controversial period of Kashmir History. Upto 1947 Kashmir was ruled by Dogra Dynasty. The same year when India became Independent and the alien British Rule came to an end, the sub-continent was divided in two parts—"Indian Dominion" and "The Dominion of Pakistan". What happened during the reign of last dogra prince Maharaja Hari Singh in 1947 and how Kashmir exceeded to India and not to Pakistan are questions of great historical importance which opened a new chapter in the political history of Kashmir. The Book contains behind the scene important political events which took place during the period. Only a few people are conversant with the sequences of events which from time to time shaped the political situation in this beautiful land described by Mughal Emperor Jahangir as "HEAVEN ON EARTH".



HAMALA KE CHESHME UBBALTE HAIN KAB TAK
KHAZAR SOCHTA HAI VULAR KE KINARE

ہمالہ کے چشمے اُبھلتے ہیں کب تک
خضر سوچتا ہے ولر کے کنارے

FOREWORD

"KASHMIR IN FLAMES" is in your hands. I have recorded thirty years events of political history in Kashmir and thereby tried to fulfil the responsibility which had been haunting my mind since past several years. In doing so I have done justice to my conscience and my people. These events of political history of Kashmir are depictive of her inner and outer politics. The purpose of publishing this book is neither to oppose nor support any political leader. I have recorded events and facts in the same form in which I received them. I have had the privilege of being very close to the top ranking leaders of the Freedom Movement in Kashmir. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah being foremost among them. I was very close to him from 1964 to 1975—the year when he resumed power. Till then I was being considered his very confident journalist. During his dialogues with the Centre in 1973-74 he offered me to join him in political field but thinking that I could serve my people better as a journalist, I declined. After resuming the office of Chief Ministership in 1975, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah twice sounded me of his desire to make the Daily 'AFTAB' his party's organ but, again, I did not deem it proper. Similarly my contacts continued for long with Maulana Mohammad Yusuf, Chowdary Ghulam Abbas, Khwaja Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Moulvi Abdul Rahim, Mohammad Yusuf Qureshi, Mirwaiz Shopiani, Maulana Mohammad Abdullah, Aga Showkat Ali, Maulana Mohammad Noor-ud-Din, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Maulana Mohammad Sayed Masoodi, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad,

Khwaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, Khwaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Qarra, Sayed Mir Qasim, Brigadier Habib-ur-Rehman of Indian National Army, General Akbar Khan-Ex Chief of General Staff of Pakistan Army who led rebels during 1947-48 war in Kashmir and Mr. Abdul Rehman Aafandi, a close and confident friend of Maharaja Hari Singh. Mr. Aafandi and Begum Aafandi had had free access in Maharaja's Palace.

The Book is based on facts and events that took place on both sides of cease-fire line observed by me or conveyed to me by most important characters in Kashmir Freedom-Movement. In publishing this Book I have no other intention except that those interested in politics and history in particular and people in general could have some knowledge of the ups and downs on both sides of border which Kashmir had to face from 1947 to 1977. I also wanted to let people know how they remained ignorant of behind the scene developments, which had their secret hands in the off and on changes in Kashmir. I hope that the book will be read in the same spirit—without any prejudice, political, ideological whatsoever. I will consider it my life's greatest achievement if this is done

I am highly grateful to my dears Mr. M.L. Kak, Yusuf Jameel and Tahir Mohu-i-Din who helped me in translating the Urdu manuscript into English. I am also thankful to ALI MOHAMMAD & SONS who published this book and helped me in presenting this to you.

Srinagar

AUTHOR

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ERRATA

- Please read 'its' for 'her' at page 1, para 3, line 12.
- Please read قومه for قوم and چہ for چہ, at page 3, para 1, line 12.
- Please omit 'his' at page 17, para 2, line 10.
- Please insert 'their' after 'neither' at page 24, para 3, line 3.
- Please insert 'and' in the first line at page 32.
- Please read 'plebisite as proposed' instead of 'plepisite as purposed' at page 38, para 2, line 10.
- Please read the heading 'They Called It' at Chapter 5 instead of heading "THEY CALLED IT" at page 43.
- Please omit 'became' before 'because' at page 70, para 3, line 9.
- Please read 'threatened' instead of 'theratenod' at page 75, para 2, line 4.
- Please read 'abducated' instead of 'deducated' at page 78, para 1, line 6.
- Please omit 'giving for' before New Delhi at page 93, line 12.
- Please omit 'on' before congregation at page 90, para 1, line 9.
- Please read 'arousing' before 'reception' at page 102, line 6.
- Please insert 'in' before 'this' at page 102, para 2, line 12.
- Please insert 'after this' after 'week' at page 104, para 1, line 12.
- Please read 'Congressman' instead of 'Congressmen' at page 105, lines 8 and 10.
- Please insert 'a' after 'Accordingly' at page 105, line 14.
- Please read 'Parliament' instead of 'New Delhi' at page 106, para 2, line 7.
- Please read 'This' instead of 'The step' at page 106, para 3, line 15.
- Please omit 'has been' and read 'as usual' at page 106, para 3, line 16.
- Please omit 'into' and read 'entered Kashmir' at page 107, para 2, line 5.
- Please read 'earlier' instead of 'early' at page 108, para 1, line 4.
- Please omit 'an' and read 'that armed' at page 108, para 2, line 3.

Please read 'movement' instead of 'moment' at page 109, para 2, line 3.

Please read 'on' instead of 'an' at page 111, para 2, line 18.

Please read 'crowd' instead of 'crowed' at page 112, para 2, line 4.

Please omit 'he' before 'briefed' at page 131, para 2, line 16.

Please read 'money' instead of 'maney' at page 149, para 1, line 17.

Please read 'opportunists' instead of 'opportunities' at page 168, para 1, line 25.

Please read 'Mrs. Gandhi' instead of 'Mr. Gandhi' at page 171, para 3, line 7.

Please read '1947' instead of '1974' at page 172, line 27.

Please read 'in' instead of 'to' at page 175, para 2, line 2.

1

BACKGROUND

In the lap of the Himalayas lies the world famous Valley of Kashmir, surrounded by mountains where the frisking cascades, bubbling springs, sprawling verdant fields and saffron belts have remained unchanged despite invasions of the Moghuls, Pathans and others.

Kashmir whose borders touch Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Russia and China has enthralled poets, emperors, warriors, sages and saints by its talismanic charms which nature has bestowed on it in abundance.

It is not only because of art and culture, natural beauty and panoramic landscapes that Kashmir is famous in the world but it is well known because of its geographical, military and political importance in this whole region, particularly in the sub-continent. With all this, its civilisation, history and unique style of people's living have been its greatness. And people of the region have, from the very inception, remained desirous of maintaining their individuality and freedom. Whenever any foreign aggressor, after crossing its gorgeous revines and mountain passes, tried to subjugate her people, the cross-section of the Valley's citizens did not lay their arms easily.

Even during the Moghul rule in India, Kashmir kept up its separate entity and independence. But the covetous eyes of King Akbar brought Kashmir in the

ambit of Moghul expansionism. It was after several bloody wars between the Moghuls and the Kashmir's traditional army that Raja Bhagwandas, who led the Moghul Army, succeeded in taking into custody Yusuf Shah Chack, the then ruler of Kashmir. Raja Bhagwandas, through deceit and dexterity, captured Yusuf Shah Chack and sent him to the Delhi Darbar of the Moghul Emperor. And this way Kashmir too became part of the Moghul Empire.

After the downfall of the Moghuls in India, Kashmir came under the direct control of Kabul and the days of the Pathan rule, as events showed it, turned out to be days of terror, repression and horror.

The dark days of the Pathan rule ended after the Balakot battle between the Sikhs and Shah Ismail and his associates. In this battle Shah Ismail achieved martyrdom¹ and after the defeat of his army the Sikhs

1. Shah Ismail Shaheed, in collaboration with Syed Ahmed Baralevi, was leader of that movement which had prepared a big organisation of fighters after the downfall of the Moghuls. This organisation under their leadership approached the direction of the sub-continent by taking the Kabul route after passing through Sindh and Baluchistan to enter the present hilly areas of North-Western Frontier Province of Pakistan. In these hilly areas they reorganised themselves. In Peshawar they had the first encounter with the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh but the Sikhs were defeated enabling the fighters to gain control over Peshawar. Later the Sikh Army retaliated and threw the fighters of the organisation out of Peshawar. When Shah Ismail and Syed Ahmed were fed up with the treachery of some Afghan Sardars, they decided to make Kashmir as the centre of their "Jihad" (The Holy War). The deceitful Afghan Sardars informed Maharaja Ranjit Singh about the plan of the marching fighters towards Kashmir. The Sikh Army encircled the marching fighters near a narrow valley of Balakot which is situated on the top right of the valley of Kagaan. It

BACKGROUND

annexed Kashmir with their kingdom of which Lahore was capital. In 1846 when after the downfall of the Sikh rule in Punjab, British handed over Kashmir to the Dogra ruler, Raja Gulab Singh, for Rs. 75 lakhs (Nanak Shahi). This sale of the fate of Kashmir is known by the Treaty of Amritsar which was signed by the representatives of the East India Company and Raja Gulab Singh at Amritsar on March 16, 1846. This treaty was described by famous poet Iqbal as a highly humiliating deal. He has said :

دھفان و کشت و جوئے بہا بیاں فروختہ شد
قوسے فروختہ شد وجہ ارزاں فروختہ شد

(The farmer, his farm, the rivers, the gardens and jungles, the whole lot including a nation, were sold and sold so cheaply).

After the Treaty of Amritsar Gulab Singh assumed the title of Maharaja and named this new State as the **STATE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**. This was the day when the State of Jammu and Kashmir came into being. The Dogra rule lasted for 101 years. Maharaja Hari Singh was the last ruler of this dynasty. Just a couple of years after Maharaja Hari Singh occupied the throne, political movement in Kashmir took birth in the shape of formation of Youngmen's Muslim Association. The movement assumed a new complexion. At Khankah Mohalla, in the compound of Shah Hamdam, several hundred citizens comprising artisans,

was in 1831 and the Sikh Army had outnumbered the fighters. But despite this the fighters did not surrender their arms and this way Syed Ahmed and Shah Ismail, alongwith their associates, achieved martyrdom at Balakot. This way the entire North-West Frontier Province and the whole of Kashmir came under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

labourers and workers assembled, most of them wearing shabby "Pherans" (long robe), announced the beginning of their struggle for seeking freedom. While raising their hands they challenged the authority which had deprived the people of political, economic and all other freedom. This was the first open demonstration of Kashmiris demanding the basic rights.

They raised their fists high and shouted loud "Inqalab Zindabad" to make an impressive beginning of the freedom struggle.

On 13th July, 1931, indiscriminate firing by Dogra soldiers on an unarmed and innocent group of people outside Srinagar Central Jail added fuel to the fire. In this merciless firing at least nineteen persons were killed. The group of the people had gone there to enquire about the fate of a person, Mr. Abdul Qadeer, who defied the ban on political speeches and was being tried by a special magistrate inside the jail premises. The innocent blood that fell on the ground culminated into a political awakening in Kashmir.

The first political party, the Muslim Conference, was openly formed by a number of prominent persons including Mirwaiz Maulvi Mohammad Yusuf and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in the same year. Soon after the formation of Muslim Conference Maulvi Mohammad Yusuf was made to believe that his leadership and the hold of his family on Kashmiri Muslims was in danger. He was given the impression that the Muslim Conference could serve as a forum for challenging his leadership. And differences among leaders of the movement started developing and when the young Muslim leadership rejected the proposal made by Maulvi Mohammad Yusuf for removal of Ahmedias

form the Conference, the Mirwaiz and his followers left the Muslim Conference whose leadership then fell in the hands of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

Later Maulvi Mohammad Yusuf and his followers formed a separate party under the name of Azad Muslim Conference. This way the forum in Kashmir got divided in two groups: one led by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the other by Maulvi Mohammad Yusuf. The division was not based on any ideology but on personality. Later the followers of the Sheikh assumed the name of "Sher", while the followers of Mirwaiz were called "Bakras".

In 1938 towards the beginning of World War II Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas and other political leaders decided to convert the Muslim Conference into National Organisation. Though in the same year the National Conference was set up, yet unity among founders of the party could not last long. After a short period Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas left the National Conference and in collaboration with Maulvi Mohammad Yusuf revived the Muslim Conference.

With changing political patterns in the British India, Kashmir too felt its impact and during the Second World War the All India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress started spreading their net in Kashmir. These two parties aimed at creating a base in the State. Despite these attempts the political movement in Kashmir remained aloof and localised to a large extent.

In the meantime in 1945, the President of All India Muslim League Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah came to Kashmir in the summer with the purpose of rest

and recreation. This was the time when the Muslim Conference had lost its nerve and it was left only in name in the valley, but a political force in Jammu Division. The National Conference enjoyed the majority support in the valley but the situation in Jammu was different. However, when Mr. Jinnah arrived in Srinagar, he was given a warm reception on behalf of the National Conference and its leaders.

The President of the National Conference, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, himself presented an address of welcome to Mr. Jinnah in Partap Park, Srinagar. Mr. Jinnah stayed in a house-boat near the Bund along with his sister, Miss Fatima Jinnah. After the arrival of Mr. Jinnah, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had a long meeting with him in the house-boat. During this meeting Mr. Jinnah persuaded Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to take up the leadership of the Muslim Conference instead of the National Conference. Although Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah agreed with Mr. Jinnah's argument that the Muslims in Kashmir were a repressed class and by and large they alone were participating in the freedom struggle, he (the Sheikh) believed that since struggle against the Maharaja in the name of Muslim Conference was being construed as a sort of communal movement, it was in the interest of the Kashmiri Muslims that they should carry their movement in the name of National Conference. But the Muslim League President did not agree with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's contention.

On the other hand, local leaders of the Muslim Conference tried to convince Mr. Jinnah that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was, in reality, with the Congress and the National Conference was a branch of the Indian

National Congress. Mr. Jinnah while speaking in Jama Masjid in Srinagar passed bitter remarks against the Sheikh. And on the basis of strong differences there ensued a sort of conflict between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the Muslim League leader Mr. Jinnah which prompted the National Conference leaders to request the Maharaja to ask Mr. Jinnah to leave Kashmir immediately. The National Conference leaders made it clear that if Mr. Jinnah was not asked to leave Kashmir immediately there was danger of bloodshed for which the Government would be held responsible. The Maharaja, who was considered a Pro-Congress Ruler, ordered on the plea of National Conference leaders, Mr. Jinnah to leave Srinagar within 24 hours. The political clash between the National Conference leader and the President of the Muslim League turned into prolonged animosity which became the basis for changing the course of political history of the entire sub-continent including Kashmir.

Out of the tussle between the President of the Muslim League and the National Conference leaders, the Congress derived much gain. The top Congress leaders, including Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, came to Kashmir and encouraged the National Conference leadership. Not only this, they participated in the Annual Session of the National Conference which was held at Sopore. They also supported the demand of self-rule made by National Conference. This way the leaders of the National Conference proved that they were, in reality, with the Congress and supported its ideals and aims. After this the National Conference leaders were included in the State People's Conference which the Congress had set

up in various states as a common platform for continuing the political movement against princely order.

All these events form the political background of the book and this very political background can help reader to understand the future developments.

THE AMRITSAR TREATY

1. Treaty of Amritsar—Treaty between the British Government and Maharaja Gulab Singh concluded at Amritsar on March 16, 1846.

Treaty between the British Government on the one part, and Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu on the other, concluded on the part of the British Government by Frederick Currie Esquire and Brenet, Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the orders of Right Honourable Sir Henry Hardinge G.C.B., one of Her Britannic Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, Governor-General, appointed by the Honourable Company to direct and control all their affairs in the East Indies, and by Maharaja Gulab Singh in person.

Article 1. The British Government transfers and makes over, for ever in independent possession, to Maharaja Gulab Singh, and the heirs male of his body, all the hilly or mountainous country, with its independencies, situated to the eastward of the River Indus, and westward of River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahul, being part of the territory ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the Provisions of Article 4 of the Treaty of Lahore, dated 9th March, 1846.

Article 2. The eastern boundary of the tract transferred by the foregoing Article to Maharaja Gulab Singh shall be laid down by the Commissioners appointed by the British Government and Maharaja Gulab Singh respectively, for that purpose, and shall be defined in a separate engagement after survey.

Article 3. In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heir by the provisions of the foregoing Articles, Maharaja Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government, the sum of 75 lacs of rupees (Nank Shahi), 50 lacs to be paid on ratification of this treaty and 25 lacs on or before the 1st of October of the current year, 1846 AD.

Article 4. The limits of the territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh shall not be at any time changed without the concurrence of the British Government.

Article 5. Maharaja Gulab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any dispute or questions that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore, or any other neighbouring state, and will abide by the decision of the British Government.

Article 6. Maharaja Gulab Singh engages for himself and heirs, to join, with whole of his military force, the British troops, when employed within the hills, or in the territories adjoining his possessions.

Article 7. Maharaja Gulab Singh engages never to take or retain, in his service any British subject, nor the subject of any European or American State, without the consent of the British Government.

Article 8. Maharaja Gulab Singh, engages to respect in regard to the territory transferred to him, the provisions of Articles 5, 7 of the separate engagement between the British Government and the Lahore Durbar, dated 11th March, 1846.

Article 9. The British Government will give its aid to Maharaja Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.

Article 10. Maharaja Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government, and will in token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve goats (six male and six female) and three pairs of Kashmiri Shawls.

This treaty consisting of the Articles has been this day settled by Frederick Currie Esqr. and Brener, Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence acting under the directions of the Right Hon'ble Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor-General on the part of the British Government and by Maharaja Gulab Singh in person and the said treaty has been this day ratified by the seal of the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor-General.

Done at Amritsar this 16th day of March in the year of our Lord 1846 corresponding with the 17th day of Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1262 Hijri.

QUIT KASHMIR

It was exactly after one hundred years that the Amritsar Treaty of March 1846 was challenged by the people of Kashmir when the National Conference President, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, openly demanded abrogation of the Treaty at various public meetings. The first public meeting was addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah at Maisuma Bazar Chowk, where it used to be a Tonga Stand, and in a forceful voice he gave the slogan of 'Kashmir Chod Do, Bainama Amritsar Toad Do' (Quit Kashmir and abrogation of the Amritsar Treaty).

When the echo of "Quit Kashmir" slogan and abrogation of the Treaty reached Jammu, it caused much anxiety to Maharaja Hari Singh who was then in Jammu.

It was Monday, May 20, 1946, 4 P.M. the cannons in the Hari Parbat Fort boomed a salute of 21 guns, announcing the arrival of Maharaja in his summer capital, Srinagar and simultaneously telegraph wires buzzed the coded message informing the Police Headquarters in Srinagar that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had been arrested at Garhi, a bottleneck on the Srinagar Rawalpindi Highway, and soon after, the news of his arrest was conveyed to the Maharaja in his palace on telephone.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah has not hitherto disclosed to anybody the reasons behind his sudden

trip to Rawalpindi and that too in the beginning of the new movement. Only two opinions were being speculated in the political circles regarding Sheikh's abortive trip to Rawalpindi. First, it was believed that he wanted to go out to muster Indian public opinion in favour of his demand for 'Quit Kashmir' and abrogation of the Amritsar Treaty. Secondly, the Sheikh is believed to have thought of going to Rawalpindi to avoid arrest.

After his arrest Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was brought to Srinagar, where he was kept in Badami Bagh Contonment. A case was registered against him on charge of treason, and the hearing of the case too was started in the Contonment Area. After the trial, the judgement announced by the Sessions Judge Kashmir, Mr. Barkat Rai, on 10 September, 1946 was as under :

"Offences under Section 124 (A) Ranbir Penal Code for the three speeches are proved against him. He is convicted under the above section on all the above three counts and sentenced to three years simple imprisonment with fine of Rs 500/- on each score. In default of payment of fine, he shall further undergo simple imprisonment for three months on each count, the sentences of imprisonment shall run concurrently."

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was subsequently shifted from Badami Bagh Cantonment to Badherwah Jail of Jammu region.

During this period the Government did not permit the Muslim Conference to hold its annual session at Srinagar. But the leaders of the Conference remained adamant and held the session resulting in the arrest of its President Ch. Ghulam Abbas and some of his

associates who were lodged in Srinagar Central Jail. The sudden arrest of Ch. Abbas brought much political harm to the Muslim Conference, and those of its leaders who were not in Jail started quarrelling with one another. Following the arrest of Ch. Abbas, Mirwaiz Maulvi Mohammad Yusuf announced that now he "is the acting President of the Muslim Conference". Since a section of the party was sceptical about the Maulvi it refused to accept him as the acting President and instead made Ch. Hamid Ullah to succeed Ch. Abbas.

On one hand the Amritsar Treaty of 1846 was being challenged by the people in Kashmir and on the other the British Government was holding parleys with the Indian leaders over question of Independence. The parleys were initiated by Sir Stafford Cripps, who was a special envoy of the British Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill. Mr. Cripps held talks with Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Nehru and other prominent leaders but he could not reach any settlement. After his failure the British Government sent a Cabinet Mission to discuss the issue with the Indian leaders. Though the representatives of the Mission held detailed discussions with the Indian leaders, it too failed to bring about a settlement.

This was followed by yet another series of parleys with the then Viceroy, Lord Wavell. He had been appointed Viceroy in India after he had faced series of reverses at the hands of Germans in the Middle East during the World War II. He too did not succeed on this political front and Mr. Jinnah expressed lack of confidence in him on the plea that Lord Wavell, by his partisan attitude, was favouring the Congress. Since Lord Wavell's role had come under a cloud, the British Government replaced him by Lord Mountbatten, a scion from the Royal Family who was also

Commander-in-Chief of the British Naval Forces, in South East Asia during the 2nd World War. Lord Mountbatten was authorised to hold talks with Indian leaders. After his series of talks with the Congress, Muslim League and other leaders Lord Mountbatten, in his report to the British Government, informed it that if the British Government agreed on the partition of India, he would be able to finalise an agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League leaders. After getting the green signal from the British Government, Lord Mountbatten made the Congress and the Muslim League leaders to agree on the partition of India. On the basis of this, the British Parliament adopted an Act, the "Indian Independence Act". Under this Act India had to be divided and the Muslim majority provinces in the far-west and far-east were to be grouped to be named Pakistan. The Act provided the following conditions :

(1) The Punjab province should be divided in two parts, the Hindu majority districts forming part of India and the Muslim majority districts will be part of Pakistan. The task of the division of the provinces should be entrusted to a high-powered commission.

(2) A referendum be held in the North-West Frontier to ascertain whether the people of the area wanted to join Pakistan or not. (The Pathans opted for Paskistan in the referendum.)

(3) The province of Bengal too be divided into two parts on the basis of Hindu majority and Muslim majority.

(4) With regard to the princely states the rulers will have the right to decide their fate but they have to keep in view the aspirations of their people, geographical and other factors while taking such decisions.

In case of the division of the provinces the principle decided laid down that those districts which had Muslim majority would be annexed with Pakistan and the ones having Hindu majority would join India. The Radcliffe Commission, which was entrusted with the task of division of Punjab, executed its plan on the same formula except in case of Gurdaspur district which had an overall muslim majority. The division in case of this district was done on the basis of tehsils with the result it was made possible to keep Pathankot tehsil in India. If Gurdaspur district, under the agreed formula, had been given to Pakistan, there could have been no border link between India and the State of Jammu and Kashmir. And, accordingly, Hindu majority tehsils of this district were given to India.

During this period the sub-continent fell prey to the Hindu-Muslim riots and the division of the country had developed sense of insecurity and anarchy. It was in July 1947 that the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, came to Kashmir from Delhi on a special mission. On the second day of his arrival he met Maharaja Hari Singh, Lord Mountbatten had met the Maharaja first when he had come to Jammu in connection with the visit of the Prince of Wales and where he had played polo with the Kashmir ruler. The two were friendly and the mission of Lord Mountbatten was to prompt the Maharaja for acceding to India. The Viceroy wanted Kashmir to accede to India despite the fact that he knew the State had 86 per cent Muslim population, most of its borders touched Pakistan, its all rivers flow down to Pakistan and its geographical situation demanded its accession to Pakistan. He, however, told the Maharaja, during his first meeting, that if he (Maharaja) wanted to accede to Pakistan, India would have no objections. But

Maharaja Hari Singh plainly refused to join Pakistan and said, "I do not want to accede to Pakistan under any circumstances".

While expressing satisfaction the Viceroy told the Maharaja, "It is in your hands ; if you do not want to join Pakistan, you should accede to India and in that case I am prepared to send one Army division to guard the frontiers of your State". To this the Maharaja replied, "I do not want to accede to India either, I want to remain independent". This reply annoyed the Viceroy who tried to convince the Maharaja that it was not feasible for him. And if he did so, he would lose his crown and his throne. Though Maharaja Hari Singh was not convinced with the Viceroy, he showed his willingness to continue his talks. But practically avoided doing so. Before his departure from Srinagar the Viceroy suggested that there be a common session between him, his advisers and the Maharaja and his advisers so that the issue of Kashmir's accession was settled. But the Maharaja, on the pretext of dysentery, expressed his inability to attend the session and the Viceroy returned to new Delhi without achieving any success in his mission.

After the unsuccessful mission of Viceroy, Mahatma Gandhi during one of his prayer meetings on July 30, 1947, dramatically announced that he would be going to Kashmir. When he was asked whether his trip was meant to patch-up the differences between the Maharaja and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, he apparently did not support this contention. It was August 1st, 1947, when Mahatma Gandhi arrived in Srinagar.

Despite Mahatma Gandhi's silence the newspapers attached great significance to his visit and speculations

were made that the Mahatma's visit was meant to persuade the recalcitrant Maharaja to accede to India. Mahatma Gandhi stayed in Srinagar for three days and before returning to Delhi he had a meeting with Maharaja Hari Singh in the palace which lasted one and a half hours. The meeting was attended by the Maharani also. When the Maharaja according to the tradition, offered Gandhiji a glass of milk, the latter, while refusing to drink it, said, "I do not want to have anything of the Maharaja whose subjects are annoyed with him (Ruler)". At this stage the Maharani got up and assured Gandhiji that whatever suggestions he would make for setting things right would be implemented. The Maharaja too endorsed his wife's statement and Gandhiji agreed to drink milk. During the discussion Gandhiji advised the Maharaja, whom he described as experienced, patriotic and loyal to the nation, to lend support for solving different problems of the country and making it strong. He suggested Maharaja Hari Singh to release Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and provide him an opportunity to play his role in the country's politics. The Maharaja assured Gandhiji that he would act upon his suggestions and advice. He also wanted his (Gandhiji's) guidance for solving some of his difficulties and problems.

After Gandhiji's return to Delhi political and administrative set-up in Kashmir started changing fastly. On August 11, 1947 the Maharaja removed Mr. R.C. Kak from the Prime Ministership and appointed one of his close relatives, Thakur Janak Singh, as the new Prime Minister. The animosity between Mr. R.C. Kak and the National Conference leaders was a common knowledge. As Maharaja Hari Singh wanted to keep Kashmir as an independent State, Mr. R.C. Kak had met Mr. Jinnah twice in this connection.

On the other side, on August 14, 1947, Pakistan came into being following reorganisation of Muslim dominated areas which was followed by India's free existence on August 15, 1947. These developments brought about political restlessness in Kashmir and during this period a "standstill agreement" between the Kashmir Government and Government of Pakistan was concluded. And trade links between Kashmir and Pakistan remained undisturbed. It may be recalled that all trade routes of Kashmir were connected with those areas which had joined Pakistan. And also the communication system was under those areas which had formed part of Pakistan. On this basis Pakistani flag was hoisted on the Posts and Telegraphs building in Srinagar.

Rapid changes in the history and politics of the sub-continent caused much anxiety to Maharaja Hari Singh who was unable to decide about the future of the State. Meanwhile some top Indian officers visited Srinagar and held secret parleys with Maharaja Hari Singh in his Palace; still the Maharaja hesitated to take a decision.

On September 14, 1947, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was brought from the Badherwah Jail, in a mysterious way, and was lodged in the Badamibagh cantonment where a number of people met him. Those who met him included the new Prime Minister, Mr Janak Singh. After 14 days of his shifting to Srinagar, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was released unconditionally on September 29, 1947. Soon after his release the issue of Kashmir's accession to India or Pakistan assumed serious dimensions. Prior to the Sheikh's release some border areas in the State had witnessed

skirmishes when law and order responsibility in these areas was with the Dogra army which had indulged in repression of Muslims in certain areas. These skirmishes took place between the Dogra army and the Muslims and during this period some leaders of the Muslim Conference, including Mirwaiz Maulvi Mohammad Yusuf had left for Pakistan to exchange ideas with the leaders there. This group had reached Lahore in the third week of September 1947, before the release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

During this period some Pakistani leaders including Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, Brigadier Habib-ur-Rehman, Miss Nasira Sadiqi and Dr. Tasir came to Srinagar to have talks with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The gist of the talks between these leaders and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was divulged to me by Brigadier Habib-ur-Rehman at Rawalpindi who had felt much disappointed after having met the Sheikh.¹

As a follow-up, a National Conference delegation, led by Mr G.M. Sadiq, went to Lahore to hold talks with the leaders of the Muslim League. There the delegation members met several League leaders including Nawab Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot. Mirwaiz Moulvi Mohammad Yusuf and his associates were also in Lahore when on October 4, 1947 Khawaja Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, while assuming the title of "Anwar" announced the formation of a rebell Government for Jammu and Kashmir. This announcement was

1. Brigadier Habib-ur-Rehman belonged to Mirpur, J & K State and had worked with Subash Chander Bose during the freedom struggle. He played a major role in raising the Indian National Army.

published in Lohare newspapers following which Mr. Gilkar reached Srinagar via Rawalpindi road. Two days after his departure from Lahore Mirwaiz Moulvi Mohammad Yusuf too left for Srinagar but he could not come beyond Murree where he was told that transport services between Srinagar and Kohala had been stopped and the entire route was unsafe. The National Conference delegation which had gone to Lahore for talks with the League leaders, too, could not come back from the same route for the same reasons.

WAR IN KASHMIR

On October 15, 1947 Maharaja Hari Singh appointed one of his friends and a leading legal expert, Mr. Mehr Chand Mahajan, as the Prime Minister replacing Mr. Janak Singh. A day after his appointment Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah suddenly left for New Delhi where he stayed for one week. During his stay he met Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Nehru, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Mr. Asaf Ali, and Sardar Patel, who was the Union Home Minister and accession documents sent by Maharaja Hari Singh to the Government of India came up for discussion. The accession document had been carried to New Delhi by a senior Indian Government officer, Mr. V. P. Menon who had drafted it following long parleys with the Maharaja. The accession document covered subjects relating to defence, communications and foreign affairs only. Mr. Menon was then Chief Adviser to Lord Mountbatten and had played a vital role in bringing about accession of various States to India. The talks between the Indian leaders and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on the future of Jammu and Kashmir were in progress when on the morning of October 22, 1947 General Auckinleke, who was Supreme Commander of the Indo-Pakistan joint army, informed the Government of India that as reported to him by General Gracy, the Acting Commander-in Chief

of Pakistan, 5,000 tribesmen had launched an attack on Kashmir.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, informed Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah about this event. This followed by a meeting in which the Governor-General Lord Mountbatten, the Prime Minister, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah participated. In the said meeting it was agreed that the instrument of accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir with the Union of India was acceptable to the Government of India as temporary and provisional which, at the appropriate time, will be referred to the people of the State for their ratification. Accordingly after seeking assurances for army help, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah flew into Srinagar by a special army aircraft on October 23, 1947. On his arrival, rumours got circulated in the city that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was being appointed Prime Minister in place of Mr. Mehr Chand Mahajan. On October 27, 1947 Maharaja Hari Singh, who had already fled to Jammu, formally announced the appointment of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as the Chief Administrator of Jammu and Kashmir. By that time the tribal raiders had occupied Baramulla and formation of "Azad Kashmir" had been announced. Earlier Pakistan Government had left the question of giving proper shape to the "Azad Kashmir" Government in the hands of the Chief Ministers of the North-West Frontier Province and Punjab, Khan Abdul Qayum Khan and Nawab Iftikhar Hussain. These two Chief Ministers asked the Commissioner of Rawalpindi, Mr. Abdul Rahim to make necessary arrangements. Mr. Abdul Rahim wanted to make Mirwaiz Moulvi Mohammad Yusuf as head of the Government in "Azad Kashmir" in accordance

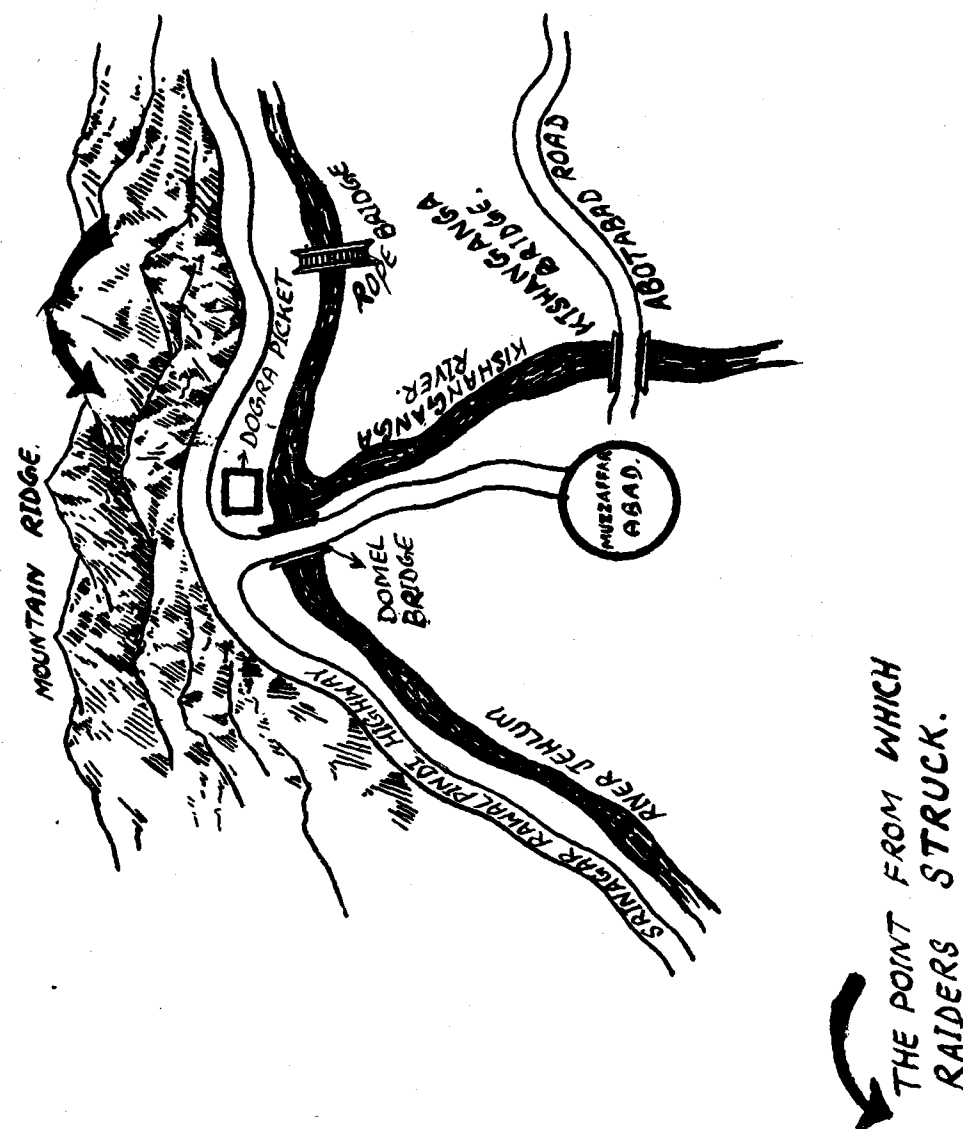
with the wishes of the Government of Pakistan. In this connection Mr. Rahim came to Murree and had two meetings with the Mirwaiz; he tried to make him agree to accept the leadership of the new Government. But the Mirwaiz did not agree on the plea that the members of his family, who were in Srinagar, would face difficulties in case he accepted the reigns of the Government in "Azad Kashmir".

And this way Pakistan Government was forced to appoint a Junior Muslim League leader, Sardar Ibrahim Khan, as president of "Azad Kashmir" though a couple of months later at his own request Mirwaiz Moulvi Mohammad Yusuf was appointed Education Minister in the cabinet of Sardar Ibrahim.

THE REALITY

There is no doubt that on October 22, 1947 a sizeable number of tribal Pathans by private trucks and buses, had reached Muzaffarabad but neither number was 5,000 nor there had been any clash between them and the State forces as was claimed by General Gracy. The tribesmen who had come via Abbottabad to Muzaffarabad in an unorganised way carrying locally made weapons, did not number more than 2,000 and stayed for complete two days in areas towards the west of river Jhelum and Kishenganga.

In the darkness of the night of October 23/24 they crossed the river by a rope bridge and reached its eastern bank. The rope bridge was there for the civilians to cross and it could accommodate one person at a time. The tribesmen climbed a hill at the foot of which, on the road leading to Kohala, was stationed a frontier camp of the Dogra Army. Some jawans of



the Army were there to help the administration and some of them were to guard the bridge on the Kishenganga river. The tribesmen fired at the Dogra Army camp early in the morning of October 24, 1947. This sudden and unexpected firing created panic in the army picket and within hours the jawans and officers boarded the army vehicles and rushed for Srinagar. The tribesmen too boarded private buses and trucks in hot chase of the Army. Upto Uri there were skirmishes between the Dogra army and the tribesmen at a couple of places but the army could not fight a determined battle. On reaching Uri the Dogra army destroyed the bridge which was of great importance on the highway and this step proved a hurdle in the way of marching tribesmen. And on one side of the bridge was the Dogra Army and on the other the tribesmen who were grouping to attack. The day passed peacefully and in the night the tribesmen started firing and some of them crossed the river on foot and attacked the Army from a close range.

The Dogra Army hurriedly and with great difficulty retreated towards Baramulla. The ruralites prepared a diversion, since the bridge had been demolished, for the tribesmen in only 24 hours to chase the fleeing Dogra Army. On reaching Baramulla the Dogra Army looted a number of shops in order to procure essential items for them, though major portion of the people had left the town for safer places. When the Dogra Army came to know that tribesmen were approaching Baramulla, they further retreated towards Srinagar and this way the tribesmen occupied Baramulla without firing a single shot.

They also indulged in looting, arson and murder. The tribesmen, who had, like lightning, reached

Baramulla from Muzaffarabad in two days, did not go ahead but stayed there. On October 27, 1947 the All India Radio in its news bulletin announced that Maharaja Hari Singh had acceded to India and the Government of India, while accepting the Maharaja's request had started sending the India Army to assist the State forces in driving out the tribesmen. Simultaneously it was broadcast that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had taken over as Chief of the State Administration. This was followed by the appointment of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as the Prime Minister by the Maharaja. In the first Cabinet he (Sheikh) formed, he included Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad as Deputy Prime Minister, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Revenue Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, Power and Works Minister, and Mr. Sham Lal Saraf, Health Minister. Mr. G.L. Dogra and Col. Pir Mohammad from Jammu too were inducted in the Cabinet besides others.

The entire day of October 27, 1947 was spent in transporting the India Army to Srinagar by air. On the other side the announcement of Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India had caused great amazement among Pakistani leaders and rulers. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Liyakat Ali Khan, rushed from Karachi to Lahore where he convened a meeting of top political leaders and army officers. Those who attended the meeting included Chief Minister of North-West Frontier Province, Khan Abdul Qayum Khan, Punjab Chief Minister, Nawab of Mamdot, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, Mr. Sikander Mirza, who was at that time joint Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, Brigadier Sher Khan and Brigadier Akbar Khan. In the conference the army officers, while keeping in view the then existing situation, suggested that Pakistan should immediately

occupy Jammu. The Prime Minister, Mr. Liyakat Ali Khan, did not agree with this suggestion on the plea that it would give India a pretext to launch an attack on Pakistan which could create severe danger for Pakistan.

Instead the Conference decided to help the invading tribesmen by providing them with more ammunition and arms and by sending more men to fight in Kashmir. Brigadier Akbar Khan was appointed the leader of the movement and under the name of *General Tariq* he assumed the leadership of the group comprising disorderly and disjointed ex-servicemen and tribesmen. In this connection an interesting and important development took place. As Governor-General of Pakistan, Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, ordered the Nation's land forces to immediately occupy Jammu when he heard the news of Kashmir's accession to India. When the military Secretary to the Governor-General conveyed the orders to the acting Commander-in-Chief General Gracy, he (the army Chief) refused to implement the orders without the permission of General Auckinleke who was Supreme Commander of Joint Indo-Pakistan Army.

GENERAL TARIQ AT THE GATE OF SRINAGAR

General Tariq¹ (Akbar Khan) left Rawalpindi for Srinagar on October 29, 1947 and reached Baramulla the same day without any difficulty.

1. I was introduced to Brigadier Akbar Khan (General Tariq) by Brigadier Habib-ur-Rehman at his residence in Rawalpindi. General Tariq would often come to that place for discussions on political problems. At times his wife, Begum Naseem, would accompany him. Abdul Rehman Aafandi, a close friend of

General Akbar Khan (Tariq) had told me that although the tribesmen had reached Baramulla on October 26, 1947 they stayed there upto October 29, 1947. When the General had asked the tribesmen the reason behind staying at Baramulla for three days they (tribesmen) informed him that their leader, Major Khurshid, had stopped them because he was waiting for the reply from Sardar Ibrahim Khan. Major Khurshid wanted to know from Sardar Ibrahim Khan about the position he (Khurshid) would be given in the Government in Kashmir. He wanted an assurance because he was fully confident that he would be able to capture Srinagar. This had surprised General Tariq.

And Major Khurshid was unaware of the price Pakistan would have to pay for the delay. How could he know at that stage that the delay would ultimately change the course of history. Had the tribesmen left for Srinagar the same day they reached Baramulla, the story of Kashmir would have been altogether different.

Maharaja Hari Singh who had migrated from Srinagar to Rawalpindi too would come to Brigadier Habib-ur-Rehman's residence for political discussions. General Tariq had great passion for Kashmir and he would often say that "Pakistan lost Kashmir because of the mistakes of Liyaqat Ali Khan."

It was in March 1951 that General Akbar Khan, the then Chief of Staff of Pakistani Army was arrested on charge of overthrowing the Liyaqat Government. However, the General was acquitted of the charge by the Court. The differences between General Akbar Khan and General Ayub Khan were there from the beginning and after Ayub Khan and General Yahya Khan's regime came to an end, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto appointed General Akbar Khan as Pakistan's Ambassador to Britain where he died in 1978.

General Tariq stayed at Baramulla for half a day and then left for Srinagar in a jeep. His journey upto Srinagar was without any mishap and difficulty. But when he reached the outskirts of Srinagar city, he heard fire shots. Four miles away from the city he stopped as it was not easy to come forward in a jeep in the face of firing. When he saw tribesmen returning fire, he was convinced that he had reached the "battlefield". He took refuge in a house where he started planning for his entry into the city. His entry was not an easy task as the fields around the city were full of rain water. When he felt a bit dismayed, he ordered the tribesmen to launch a full attack on the troops on the roadside so that the way to Srinagar was cleared of the Army and other obstacles. But the plan did not make any headway as the attacking tribesmen were butchered and killed by the fire from machine guns, mortars and rifles.

During daytime General Tariq would keep himself inside the house. He would camouflage his jeep with shrubs and branches and in the darkness would start his military activities when there was no danger of an air attack. He had made all enquiries about the Army and defence strength in Srinagar. He had the impression that he would be able to occupy Srinagar if he had only one battallion under his command. His target was Srinagar and twice he tried to enter the city in boats but could not do so as it needed support from the local people. The local men who had boats and could help him easily did not want to take any risk so they were not prepared to help General Tariq to bring his men by boats in the city of Srinagar.

On the third day in the evening General Tariq left for Rawalpindi where he contacted the Quarter

Master at the Army Headquarters for war equipped vehicles and one army regiment. He believed that this reinforcement was enough to capture Srinagar. The Quarter Master agreed to provide the men and material but Brigadier Sher Khan, who was incharge rejected the proposal. As such the tribesmen were left to their fate and under a spirit of dismay they started retreating when the Indian Army mounted a massive attack on them. They fled away to Uri with same speed in which they had come upto Srinagar and at Uri only a small group stayed whereas the rest went back to their region.

After one week General Tariq was made to agree by the Government of Pakistan to launch a fresh attack and in this connection he came to Uri where he regrouped and reorganised tribesmen and ex-servicemen.

4

KASHMIR IN UNITED NATIONS

Two months after the war started India took the Kashmir question to the Security Council in the first week of January, 1948. India made an appeal to the United Nations to characterise Pakistan as "an aggressor" as it launched a war in Jammu and Kashmir which had become "part of India legally and constitutionally." It sought the UN intervention to get the "aggressors" vacate the Indian territory in Jammu and Kashmir. When the Security Council took up the Kashmir issue for discussion, the Indian representative, Mr. Gopalaswami Aiyangar, and the Pakistani representative, Sir Zaffar Ullah Khan, participated in the deliberations. After listening to arguments and counter-arguments, the Security Council adopted its first resolution on Kashmir on April 21, 1948. According to the resolution a commission was set up to assess the situation in the sub-continent and submit its report to the Council. The members of the Commission came to India and Pakistan and besides visiting Karachi and New Delhi they paid a visit to Srinagar and Muzaffarabad. Some members of the Commission visited secretly the war areas to ascertain the reality before it submitted the report to the Security Council. During 1948 the Security Council met on several occasions and resolutions were adopted. On the other side war in Kashmir's frontiers continued inspite of

the attempts made by the Security Council, India and Pakistan to solve the dispute through direct negotiations.

During this period the Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, held a number of meetings with Ch. Ghulam Abbas who was lodged in Jammu Jail. Between January-February, 1948, as the 'Durbar' had moved to Jammu for the winter, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Ch. Ghulam Abbas, during their third meeting, agreed on a formula.

Accordingly, the Sheikh asked his Deputy, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, who held the portfolio of Law and Order, on February 26, 1948 to make arrangements for the release of Ch. Abbas and his trip to Pakistan through Suchetgarh road near Sialkot. On February 28, 1948 Ch. Abbas was released from the jail and the Pakistani newspapers carried the news of his release and entry into Pakistan, via Scuhetgarh, on March 2, 1948.

The wife and other members of his family were at Sialkot where they had reached during the riots of September 1947 after crossing various hurdles from Jammu. And as the news of Ch. Abbas's arrival appeared to be significant, some leading Pakistani leaders and journalists came to Sialkot to meet Ch. Ghulam Abbas. But he refused to divulge anything about his mission and when he was pressed for it, he said so long he would not meet Mr. Jinnah in Karachi, he would not say anything. He made it clear that after his meeting with the Qaide-Azam, he will be able to say something about his release and other related matters. This led to number of speculations and everybody looked forward to his meeting with Mr. Jinnah.

After staying at Sialkot for few weeks, Ch. Ghulam Abbas reached Lahore where he spent two days before leaving for Karachi. He met Mr. Jinnah and spent one week in Karachi after which he arrived back to Lahore. When some journalists came to know of his arrival in Lahore from Karachi, they rushed to the place where he was staying to know about his mission. Ch. Abbas casually informed them that next morning he would enlighten them on the situation but he slipped secretly for Sialkot in the same evening by a train where he adopted silence.

A few years later I met him at his place at Abatabad¹. I broached the subject again and plainly asked the reason behind his silence over his mission. I wanted to know why he did not say anything after he met Mr. Jinnah in Karachi when he had assured newsmen that he would divulge everything about his mission after meeting the Qaid-e-Azam. He had not done so and I asked him to let me know the background of his release from the Jammu jail in 1948 and his mission to Pakistan. He kept on procrastinating and then assured me that he would reveal everything in his book "Kashmakash". But when "Kashmakash" was published there was no hint about it.

One day I got an opportunity to remind Ch. Ghulam Abbas that inspite of his promise he did not made any mention about his release from the Jammu jail and his mission to Pakistan in his book "Kash-

1. My first meeting with Ch. Ghulam Abbas took place in 1948 at Delhi Muslim Hotel, Anarkali in Lahore where he stayed for two days before leaving for Karachi. Since then I was in contact with him till 1956.

makash". I also told him that if I do not know everything of his mission to Pakistan, I knew much about it because Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's security officer, Mr. Suleharia (who had come from Kashmir to Pakistan) had informed me about his meetings with Kashmir Prime Minister¹. After seeking an assurance from me that I would not publish anything in my newspaper, he made some revelations to me.

Ch. Abbas had discussion with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on number of issues. The two leaders had agreed on putting to an end what was happening those days in Jammu and Kashmir. The two leaders wanted an end to the war that was going on at that time. What the two leaders decided included cessation of hostilities between India and Pakistan in Kashmir and restoration of August 15, 1947 position in the State. "The two leaders had also agreed upon having a National Conference-Muslim Conference coalition Government in the State and restoration of trade and tour links with the both dominions India and Pakistan. According to the agreement this position was to continue for three to five years and after that people of the State should have the right to decide their fate, through plebiscite, whether they wanted continuation of the then existing position or align and accede with either India or Pakistan. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Ch. Abbas had also agreed to have a round-table conference among responsible leaders of the two countries to settle all problems through negotiations".

1. Mr. Suleharia belonged to Jammu and was Sub-Inspector in J & K Police Department. After Partition he went to Pakistan where he joined the Army.

Ch. Abbas told me that when he submitted the proposal, as worked out with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, to Mr. Jinnah, he expressed his doubts and rejected the formula outrightly and said "since the Kashmir issue had been taken by India to the United Nations, we should await the decisions of the world body".

Ch. Abbas did not divulge anything about his mission in the "interest of the nation". He also informed me that when the American Vice-President, Mr. Adlai Stevenson, came to Rawalpindi in the second week of April, 1953, he had sent for him. And Mr. Abbas met the Vice-President in the circuit House in Rawalpindi where they discussed the Abbas-Sheikh Formula. Mr. Stevenson disclosed that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had told him (Stevenson) everything about the formula and the release of Ch. Abbas from the Jammu Jail. It may be added here that Mr. Stevenson had come to Srinagar also during his visit to the sub-continent and in Srinagar, during his brief stay, he had talks with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

Even the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, had mooted the idea of having a round-table conference to find a solution to the issue. He had made this proposal during the beginning of 1948 and wanted to include in the Conference the Governor General of India, Lord Mount Batten, Governor General of Pakistan, Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Prime Ministers of the two countries, Mr. Liyaqat Ali Khan and Mr. Nehru, Maharaja Hari Singh and Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. In the proposal provision was kept for

including more people in the Conference for mutual discussion.

Pakistan accepted the proposal after placing certain conditions. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr Liyaqat Ali Khan, informed the Prime Minister of India that since Mr. Jinnah's health was not good, the conference should be held in Lahore as Mr. Jinnah was not in a position to have a journey from Karachi to New Delhi. Another condition was that the names suggested by the Indian Government for inclusion in the round-table conference were acceptable to Pakistan except the name of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. But later the round-table conference did not materialise.

In July 1948, the United Nation's Commission for India and Pakistan proposed ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir State, which would follow the other steps for the settlement of dispute on Kashmir, which both countries accepted. A few weeks later, on September 11, 1948, the Governor-General of Pakistan, Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah passed away. And on September 12, people of Pakistan listened to an important special news bulletin—informing about the death of Mr. Jinnah and few days later, the Indian Army entered in Hyderabad (Deccan) and crushed the "Razakar Movement" which was demanding independent status for the State of Hyderabad.

Under the ceasefire proposal put forth by the UN Commission it had been decided that both India and Pakistan stop war in Kashmir immediately after which the work of supervising the ceasefire line be entrusted to the UN military observers. The proposal also had suggested that the strength of the army on both sides was greatly reduced and after normalcy was

restored, a referendum was held to allow the people of the State to decide whether they would accede to India or to Pakistan or remain independent. This formula had been accepted by India as well as Pakistan and accordingly the ceasefire orders came into force from the midnight of December 31, 1948. And as per the January 5, 1949 Security Council resolution the UN military observers started coming to Kashmir.

At the time of the ceasefire about half of the area of District Mirpur, half of District Poonch and major area of District Muzaffarbad (areas which touched Pakistan territory) went to Pakistan and the rest of the area of the State fell under the control of India.

There was no unanimity of views between the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Liyaqat Ali Khan, and some Army Generals on the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir. The Pakistani Army officers believed that the ceasefire should have been accepted when the major area of Poonch district was under Pakistani control and Pakistani army was marching towards Baramulla. This situation existed three months before the ceasefire and India was aware of the fact that war would end within two months and that is why it launched a heavy attack on Pakistani army in Jammu and Kashmir area to take back several places of military importance from the control of Pakistan.

But on the other side the Government of Pakistan and her fighting men in Kashmir were unaware of all these developments and when the army officers were consulted on the question of ceasefire, they had suggested to Mr. Liyaqat Ali Khan to avoid the ceasefire agreement for a couple of months till they were able to gain advantageous position on the war

front. This could help Pakistan to bargain during any political settlement. But the Prime Minister, Mr. Liyaqat Ali Khan, rejected these suggestions and the ceasefire agreement was signed.

After the ceasefire, on December 17, 1949, the United Nations Security Council appointed General McNaughton of Canada as the informal mediator. General McNaughton proposed a formula for a final settlement of Kashmir dispute but India rejected it. The UN Security Council met again in early 1950 and appointed an Australian Jurist, Sir Owen Dixon, as a mediator. Mr. Dixon arrived in the sub-continent on May 27, 1950 to negotiate the demilitarisation and holding a plebisite as purposed in the UN resolutions. After prolonged talks in New Delhi, Karachi and Srinagar Mr. Dixon proposed a formula which was reportedly favoured by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. In his formula Mr. Dixon had proposed the division of the State and to grant the independent status for the valley of Kashmir. The formula was rejected by the Government of India as well as by the Government of Pakistan.

Meanwhile the politics in Jammu and Kashmir entered into a new phase. The areas of the State which were under the control of India had the National Conference Government and the areas under the control of Pakistan had the Muslim Conference Government. The National Conference and the Muslim Conference were two major political parties and gradually differences among leaders of these two big parties started raising their head.

Ch. Ghulam Abbas made the Prime Minister, Mr. Liyaqat Ali Khan, agree on ousting Sardar

Mohammad Ibrahim Khan from the Presidentship of "Azad Kashmir". He, however, did not occupy the seat himself because he thought it "below his dignity". Consequently Mr. Abbas got the post for one retired army officer Mr. Ali Ahmed Shah, and he himself became the Supreme Head of the Government. The differences among Muslim Conference leaders further increased. Sardar Ibrahim had started a campaign against Ch. Abbas and at the other side the Party General Secretary, Aga Shaukat Ali, and Mirwaiz Maulana Mohammad Yusuf who was Education Minister, had separated from the Muslim Conference and the Government. And as the differences became severe, Ch. Abbas befriended Moulvi Abdul Rahim, Mirwaiz Mohammed Abdullah Shah Shopiani, Pir Zia-ul-Din Badgami and Mr. Mohammad Yusuf Qureshi by providing monthly salary to them since they were facing problem of living. This could not bring peace and rest to Ch. Abbas as Pakistan's Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Nawab Mushtaq Ahmed Gormani, was against him.

The Nawab would say that as one sheath "cannot contain" two swords, similarly in a country, there can be no two "Qaid-e-Milats". He would say in the presence of Qaid-e-Milat, Mr. Liyaqat Ali Khan, "what could be the status of Ch. Abbas who tried to roam as another Quid-e-Milat". After the assassination of Mr. Liyaqat Ali Khan, Nawab Mushtaq Ahmed Gormani was made the Interior Minister in the Pak Cabinet headed by Khawaja Nazim-ul-Din. Mr. Gormani arranged for the dismissal of Ch. Abbas within four months and Mirwaiz Maulana Mohammad Yusuf was appointed caretaker President of Azad Kashmir. Since the Mirwaiz was unaware of Government affairs he appointed his cousin, Maulvi Mohammad Noor-ud-Din,

Mr. Mohammad Yusuf Buch, and Moulvi Abdul Rahim as his advisers. Mr. Mohammad Yusuf Buch was Principal Secretary to Ch. Ghulam Abbas who was Supreme Head of "Azad Kashmir" Government and Moulvi Abdul Rahim was Secretary to Ch. Abbas. After the fall of Ch. Ghulam Abbas they changed their loyalty.

The Government headed by Mirwaiz Maulana Mohammad Yusuf could function for only 11 months because lack of trust and confidence had developed between the Secretaries of Government of Pakistan and the Mirwaiz. The antagonists of the Mirwaiz made Karachi to agree to appoint some citizen of "Azad Kashmir" as President in place of the Mirwaiz. Those very days a copy of the annual budget proposals for Azad Kashmir was forwarded to the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, Government of Pakistan. According to the proposals no financial assistance or help was required from Pakistan, which provoked the Pakistani officials. The Joint Secretary for Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, Government of Pakistan whose office was in Rawalpindi, invited the Mirwaiz, who was at that time in Muzaffarabad, to Rawalpindi for discussions on the budget proposals. During the discussion, the Joint Secretary told the caretaker President of Azad Kashmir, that Pakistan wants economic developments in Azad Kashmir and the financial aid from the Government of Pakistan is necessary for that purpose, but the budget proposals framed by the caretaker Government reflect the separatist tendencies and he has received instructions from Karachi to frame the new budget proposals for Azad Kashmir which will enable the caretaker Government to receive the financial aid.

During the discussion Maulana Mohammad Yusuf, however, said that he would accept the budget proposals for the speedy developments of Azad Kashmir which would be finalised by the Government of Pakistan. Next day he received a request on telephone, from the Joint Secretary for coming to Shahzada Kothi, where offices of the Ministry for Kashmir Affairs were located for having a look at the budget. The Mirwaiz went to the office in the afternoon where, after being received warmly, he was shown a copy of the budget in English. The Joint Secretary read out some important and relevant portions of the budget and asked the Mirwaiz to sign it, in case he accepted the proposal, so that it would be sent to Karachi for approval from the Ministry of Finance. The caretaker President signed wherever he was asked to sign. That very evening Azad Kashmir radio, dramatically announced that the caretaker President, Maulana Mohammad Yusuf, had resigned. This news greatly surprised the Mirwaiz himself because he had not resigned. When his Secretary, Mir Hidayatullah telephoned the radio station and the Joint Secretary for Kashmir Affairs, he was informed that the Mirwaiz had resigned. Later it was known that in the budget papers which were signed by the Mirwaiz unknowingly included his resignation also. Since the Mirwaiz did not know the English language he had signed all the papers while reposing trust in the conversation with the Joint Secretary.

This way the reigns of the Government in Azad Kashmir fell in the hands of Sher Ahmed Khan who was a retired Subedar Major and an honorary colonel. This was the fourth change in the political leadership of Azad Kashmir and on other side of the ceasefire line, where the power was in the hand of National

Conference, situation was more dismaying. The differences among the National Conference leaders were widening and the trust between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and New Delhi was wanning.

5

THEY CALLED IT "THE PEOPLE'S RULE"

The prime misfortune about Kashmir lies in the fact that bulk of its population is illiterate. According to general calculation it is believed that only fifteen per cent of total population are educated. Even this little portion of the educated cannot remain uninfluenced by the situation in which they live, and, thus, despite their education, they remain slaves of their surroundings. Consequently, the thinking, reflection and ideas of this section of Kashmiris are not in any way different than their uneducated brethren. Due to this basic drawback the main bulk of population, instead of developing a healthy political thinking and different political ideologies, has remained caught up in personal devotions and blind faith. It was because of this personal worship and blind faith that in Kashmir different political ideologies could not take shape to the extent to which it developed the personal political cycophancy. As already stated while painting the background, that in 1932 the political movement got polarized into two personalities instead of two different political ideologies. Thus politics turned into personal rivalries amongst the followers of Mirwaiz family and that of the followers of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah; or later on, between the followers of National Conference and

Muslim-Conference. Instead of adhering to point of views, purposes democratic principles, one party stuck blindly to the word of its leader and for the other party the declarations of its leader became a binding for its action. Most of the people being meducated they take pleasure in attending the preachings or in listening to what political leaders speak. Even such speeches and preachings are beyond the comprehension of these people ; thus most of the people cannot but give expression through the utterance of "That is true" through repeated introductions of clapperings of their hands, without any knowledge of its appropriateness, or through the vehement cries of Zindabad. Establishing this fact about the people, Mirwaiz Maulana Yusuf once expressed that he was convinced about the fact that hardly two or four persons out of the attendance would understand the meanings and purpose of his preachings. The entire people, having a few, used to be nothing excepting a purposeless herd of sheep. This backwardness of the people was an ideal situation for political leaders, preachers and priests who always reaped the harvests much profitably. In fact none amongst them made an effort to arouse and enkindle amongst masses the real consciousness, independent reflection and thinking and the sense of discretion between truth and falsehood. Possibly this might have been a conscious effort on the part of leadership, because when a nation gains mastery of a mature political level and thinking, then it cannot be easily waylaid or deceived.

In Kashmir the blind followership of priests has been the way of life through generations and even the political field could not remain free from its influences, thus giving rise to the concept of blind followership and cult of personality. It is due to this fact that even

after about twenty years of political struggle against the Dogra Autocratic Rule when in 1947 a political rule was established, Kashmiri people had to face a confusing situation. On the one hand a Government lead by National Conference, which supported accession with India, was established. While on the other hand another Government led by Muslim Conference, supporting accession with Pakistan, was formulated. The areas on which the establishment of Muslim Conference rule was being claimed, it was not possible for them to lay this regime even during the period of 1948. This regime of Muslim Conference which was being named as independent Government, had got its Headquarters established in Rawalpindi in a house situated on Asgar Mal Road ; while Azad Kashmir Radio was installed in Murree. After the declaration of ceasefire in 1949 the capital of Azad Kashmir regime was shifted from Rawalpindi to Muzaffarabad, where most of its offices were sheltered in tents. The influence and power of this regime was only nominal but in reality the power and management laid in the hands of Army in the valley, who were being doubted of having sympathies with Pakistan, would in order to escape arrests, cross the frontiers of ceasefire line. Thousands of Kashmiris, on the basis of many other accusations, would cross the ceasefire line and would enter in Azad Kashmir. Immediately these people would be intervened, for weeks together, for interrogations in various military concentration centres. Generally they were being doubted for having crossed over for espionage work. After experiencing the hardships of interrogation and going through numberless disappointments, most of the people would be repenting for having left their homes. They would be facing the problems of unemployment and shelter as well, for

which the Muslim Conference Leadership would be in the least helpful to them.

After the ceasefire Chaudri Ghulam Abbas utilised all his means to expel Sardar Ibrahim Khan from the Government ; and consequently Pakistan Government, after having expelled Sadar Ibrahim Khan, handed over the power to Chaudri Ghulam Abbas. After assumption of power Chaudri started showing discriminatory favours towards Jammu migrants, and this resulted in spreading disfavour for Ghulam Abbas in a big section of Kashmiri migrants. Due to these policies Kashmiri migrants became against Chaudri Abbas and while raising a protesting voice Mirwaiz Maulana Mohammad Yusuf resigned from Azad Kashmir Cabinet. He also separated himself from Muslim Conference and established a separate organisation. Due to the infighting for power amongst the leaders of Muslim Conference the party got disjointed ; and as a result of this Sardar Mohammad Ibrahim Khan also formulated a separate party. Like this the political disintegration went on multiplying. On the other side National Conference took over power and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah became the Chief Administrator, while other leaders of the party became Administrators and emergence officers of different areas and zones. Immediately after these appointments in Kashmir on eve of fear also political revengefulness started. Remaining Muslim Conference leaders alongwith those who did not contribute to the view of the Government, were picked up one by one and thrown in jails. General Secretary of the Conference Aga Saukat Ali, Maulana Mohammad Noorudin, Khawja Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah Shopyani, Maulvi Abdul Rahim, Khawja Abdul Gani, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz and his colleagues, Khawja

Abdul Salam Yatu—the president of Kissan Mazdoor Conference and his colleagues ; later on all these leaders, excepting Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz and a few of his colleagues were taken to Jammu wherefrom they were pushed into Pakistan through Suchetgarh Border. Although, due to the pressure from Delhi, Mr. Prem Nath Bazaz and some of his close colleagues, namely Mr. Jagan Nath Sathu, Pitambarnath Dhar 'Fani' and Mr. Shyam Lal Yecha, were released from jails, but there were externed from the State and as a result of this action most of these people had to get settled in New Delhi. The next result of these oppressive measures was that the rights for maintaining the different opinions in politics and administration, the right of criticism for the wrong steps taken by the ruling party were denied to the people. Not only the maintenance of independent conscience, but also the rights of citizenship were denied to those who opposed the Government in power. Thus on administrative level the dictatorship of National Conference was completely established. In Jammu most of the Muslim population after the communal riots of 1947 had either voluntarily or by crossing stealthily, migrated to Pakistan ; and the ruling National Conference could not establish its control over the people of this side of the State¹ despite the oppressive rule of National Conference in Kashmir the follo-

1. In this respect Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's own statement of 1964, given in one of the meetings at his Soura Residence, is worthy to note. He said "In 1947 and after, I have arrested hundreds of Kashmiri Muslims and have imprisoned them and also have externed many of them. On this action of mine the Indian Press showered many praises and appreciations ; but as soon as I imprisoned fourteen Hindu Praja Parishad men from Jammu for their agitation against the State Government, the entire Indian Press and public opinion flooded their opinion against me".

wers of Muslim Conference and anti-National Conference elements continued their activities. Some of them remained absconding and also formulated an underground organisation. The political situation had become precarious and the most oppressive measures were introduced to suppress the voice of opponents. The administration was reduced to a hand-maid of National Conference, and its office holders became virtually masters of public fate. These masters could bring anyone under their sword of suppression and could arrest anyone of their choice. This period was popularly known as "Halqa president Raj" meaning thereby the rule of the party "Presidents of National Conference". The judicial rights of the courts restricted and instead all the decisions were arrived at by these Halqa Committees. There was acute shortage of kerosene and salt in the valley, and the entire distribution of these commodities was kept in the hands of National Conference office bearers. Many homes carried on for days together without having any piece of salt to taste. This condition has been aptly painted by the leading Kashmiri Poet Mahjoor in the following composition :

"Noonas gauos National Waanus
Thoupham gode ral Hindustanus Seeth,
Zoojan wandha Hindustanus,
Dil chum Pakistanus Seeth"

(I went to a National Shop to purchase salt. The shopkeeper asked me that without pledging support for accession to India, I cannot get salt. I replied "I do not hate India, but my heart goes to Pakistan".)

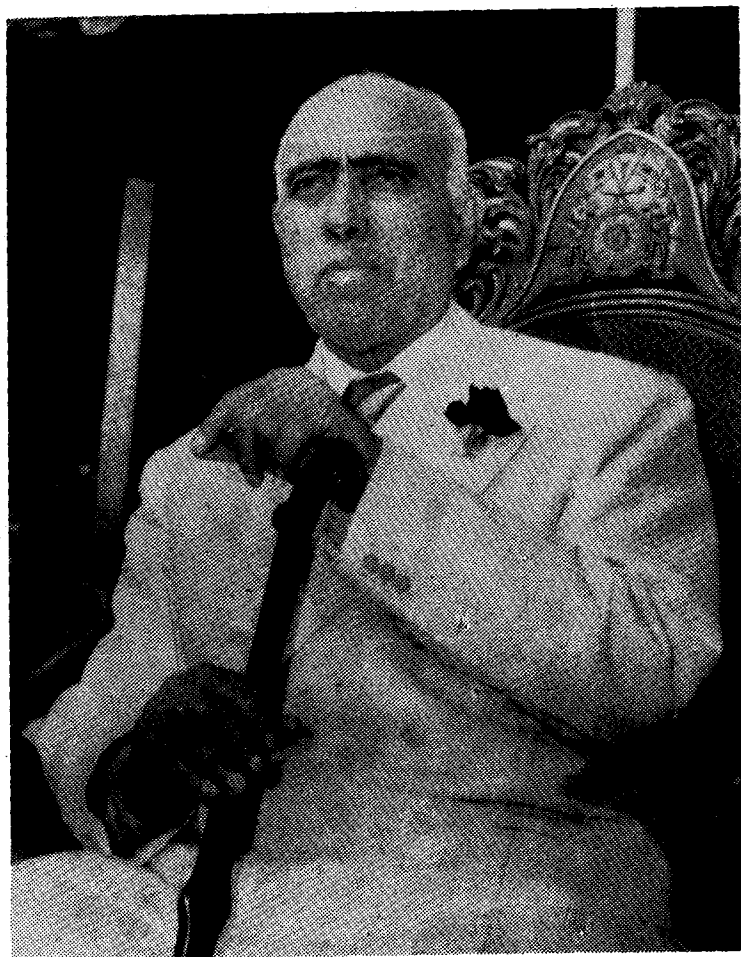
The people who made officials, had not any knowledge of official procedures, and thus injustice became



"من تو شدم - تو من شدی"

"MAN TO SHUDAM, TOO MAN SHUDI"

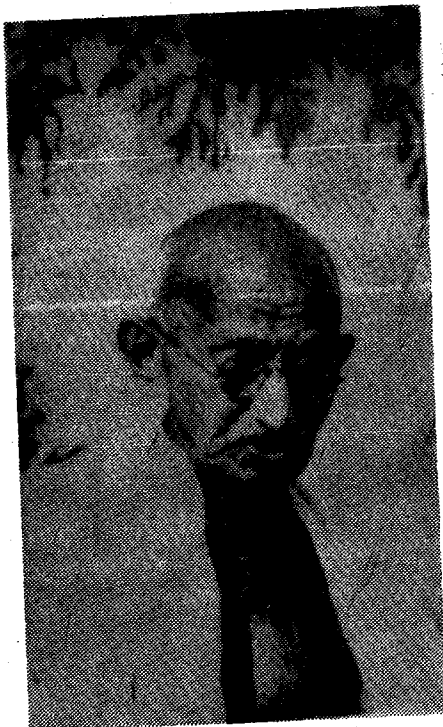
1947—The Prime Minister Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah declared in a momenth public meeting at the Historical LAL CHOWK of Srinagar that 'Kashmir will remain in India for ever'



Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah



The last Ruler of Dogra Dynesty—Maharaja Hari Singh



Gandhi Ji, a magnetic personality, whose visit to Kashmir in the first week of August 1947, paved the way for Kashmir's Accession to India



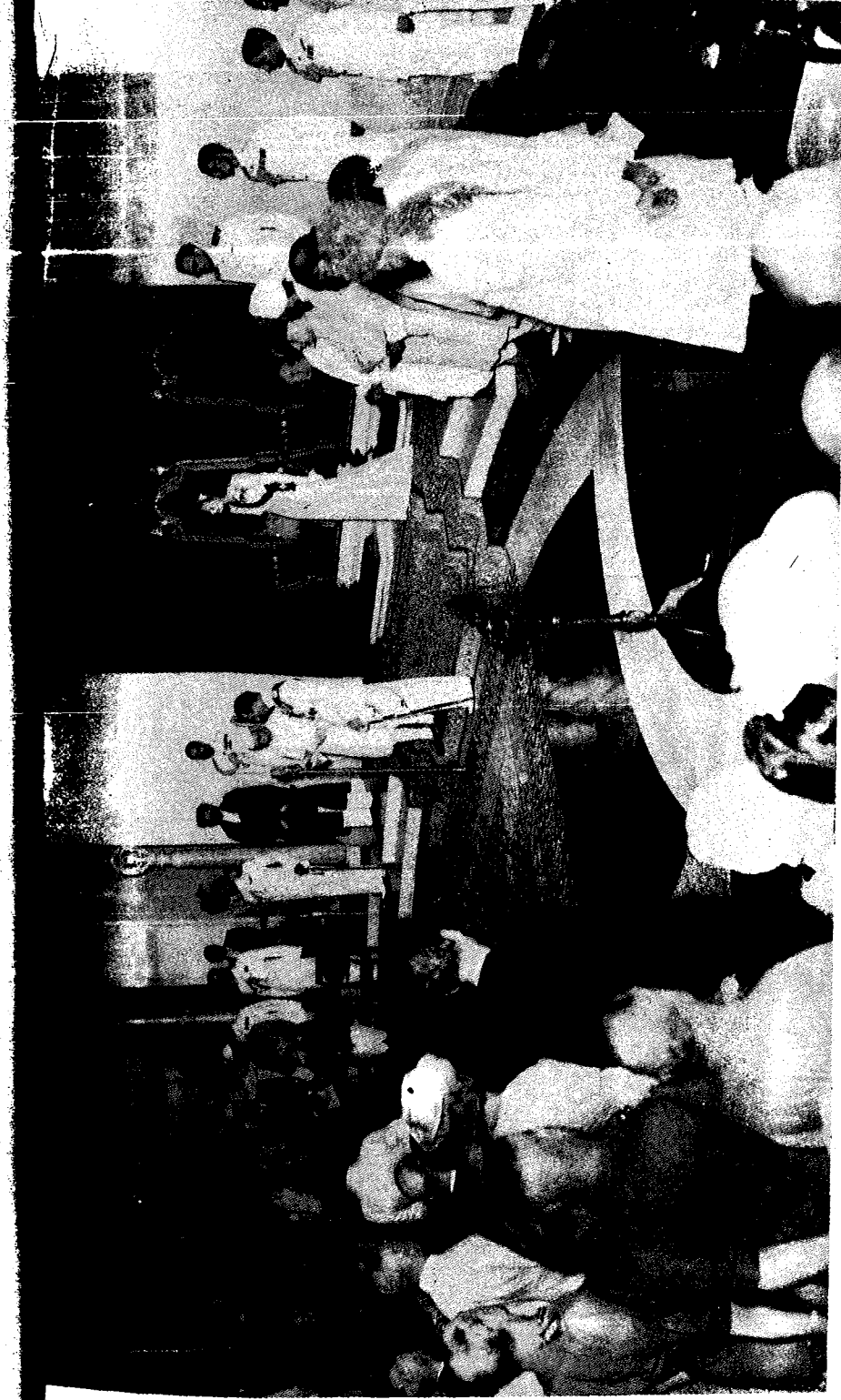
Gandhi in Srinagar—with Begum Abdullah and her daughter Khalida



Khwaja Gulam Nabi Gilkar "ANWAR" who declared a 'people's parallel Government' on the 4th October, 1947 and headed it himself



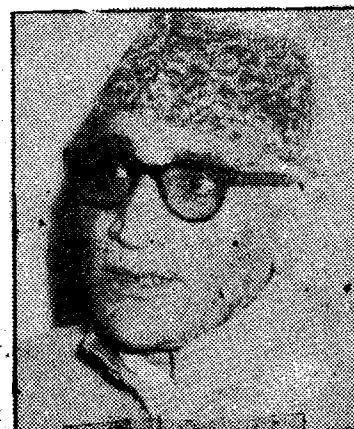
Following the agreement between the Congress and Muslim League Leaders, on the 14th August 1947, Lord Mountbatten is administering the oath to Mr. M. A. Jinnah as the first Governor General of Pakistan



The Independence of India—Lord Mountbatten is administering the oath of the office to Mr. Nehru as the first Prime Minister of Independent India



Mr. Gopala Swami Aayenger and Chaudri Sir Zaffarullah Khan, who appeared in the U.N. Security Council for India and Pakistan respectively to plead their cases on Kashmir



Mirwaiz Maulana Mohammad Yusuf and Chaudri Gulam Abbas who wanted Kashmir's accession to Pakistan



The Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Liyaqat Ali Khan arrives to address a public meeting in the Company Bagh where he was assassinated



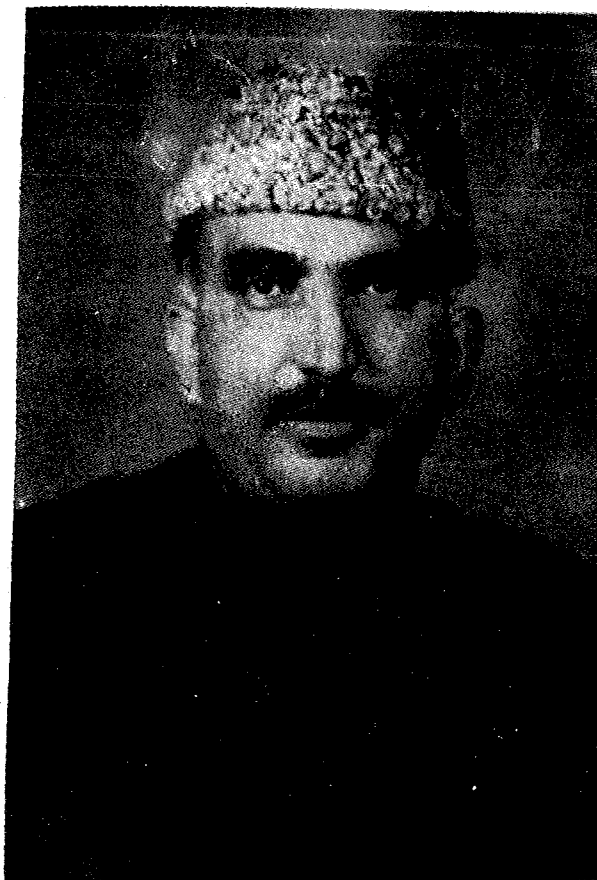
Liyaqat Ali Khan in chair on the platform where he was fired upon



The first Prime Minister of Pakistan who was shot dead



The Assessor Sayed Akbar's dead body in the Company Bagh grounds



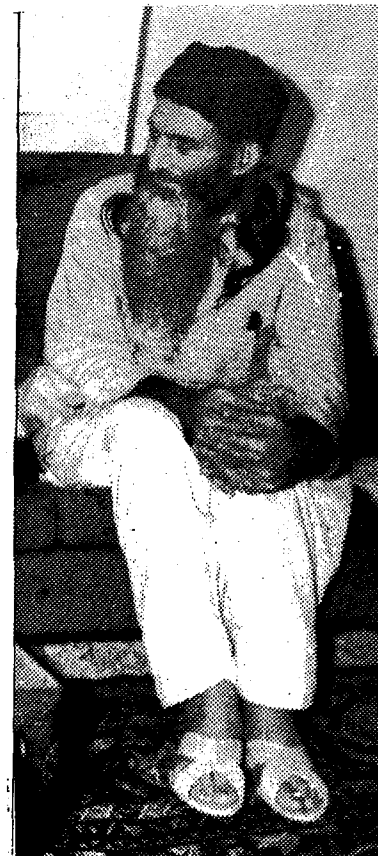
Bakshi Gulam Mohammad, who became the Prime Minister of J. & K. State after the dismissal and detention of the Shiekh in 1953



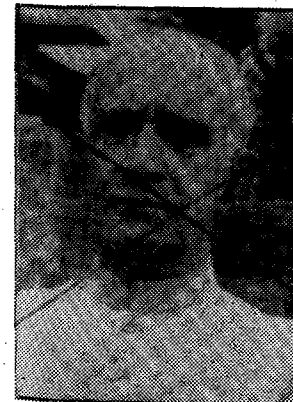
Mr. Shamasuddin, who succeeded the Bakshi in 1963



Mr. G. M. Sadiq, who was installed as the Chief Minister soon after the Holy Relic Movement



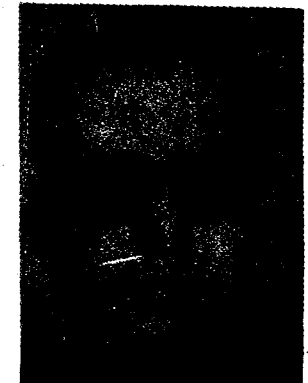
Maulana Masoodi—who led the Holy Relic Movement in 1963



Sardar Mohammad Ibrahim Khan—who was installed as President of Azad Kashmir on the 24th October, 1947



Mr. D. P. Dhar, who played an important role in Kashmir from 1953 to 1975



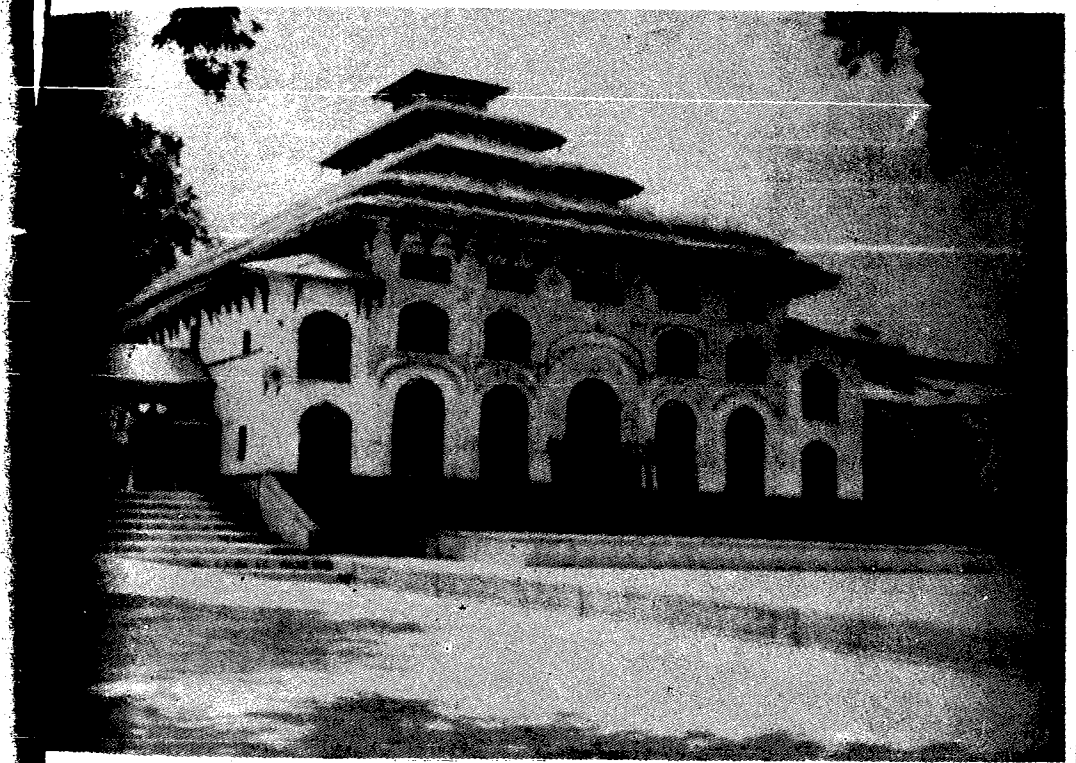
Khwaja Gulam Mohuidin Karra—who also played an important role in Kashmir's Political Affairs



Sayed Mir Qasim, who stepped down from the Chief Ministership and S. M. Abdullah succeeded him in 1975



Dr. Karan Singh—who was appointed the first Sadre Riyasat at the end of Dogra Dynasty Rule



The Hazratbal Shrine of Srinagar which was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and wherefrom the Holy Relic was stolen



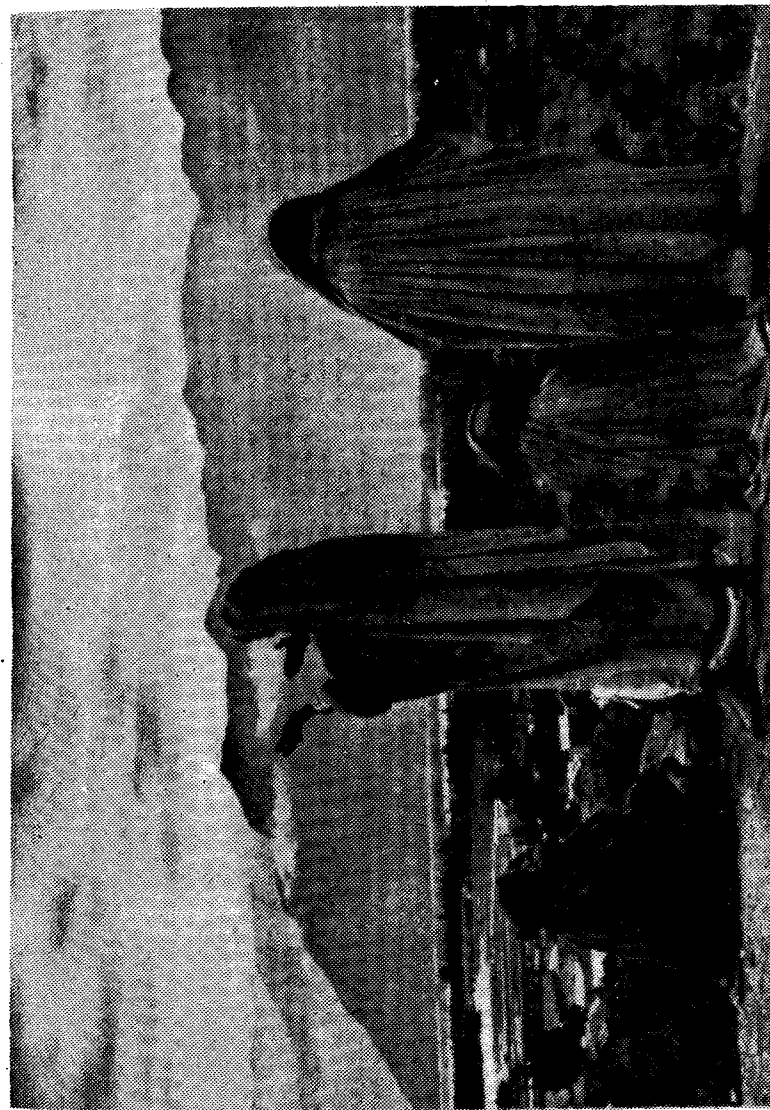
The Hundreds and Thousands of people are demonstrating with black flags against the theft



The people come out in the Streets of Srinagar against the theft



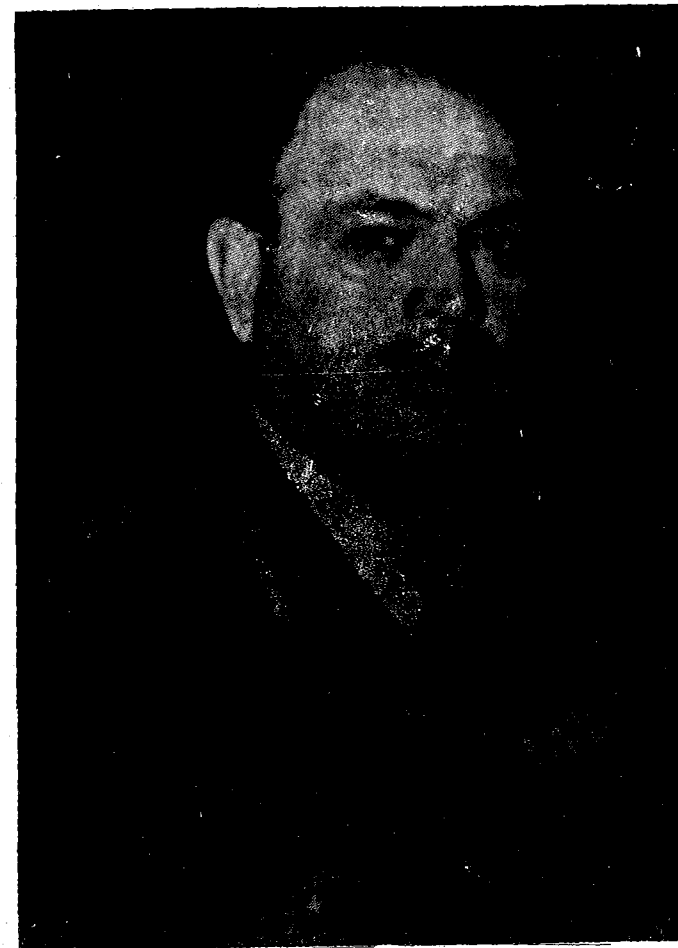
The men, women and children are protesting in the streets of Srinagar, against the theft



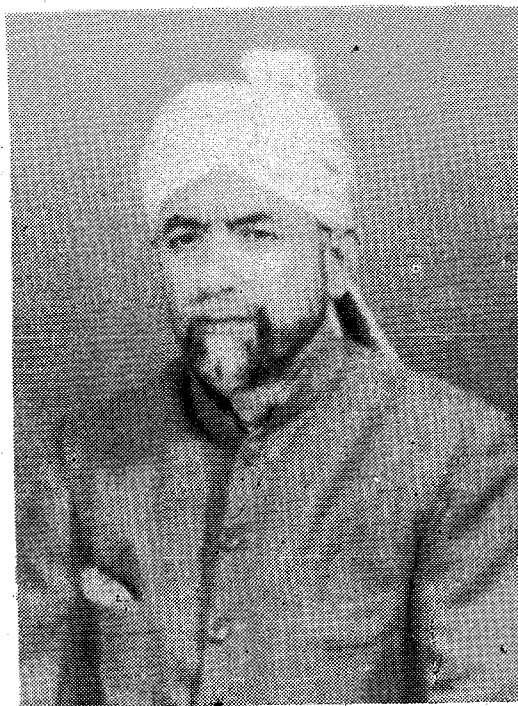
The Kashmiri Women wearing traditional dresses—
"OH GOD HELP US"



Mr. Lal Bhadur Shastri—who's efforts brought and end to the Holy Relic Movement



Field Marshall Ayub Khan—whose 1965 Operation in Kashmir, led to a full scale War between India and Pakistan



Munshi Mohammad Ishaq—who disclosed the actual story of 1965
Operation



**Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi and President of Pakistan
Mr. Z. A. Bhutto—**at Simla after signing the Agreement



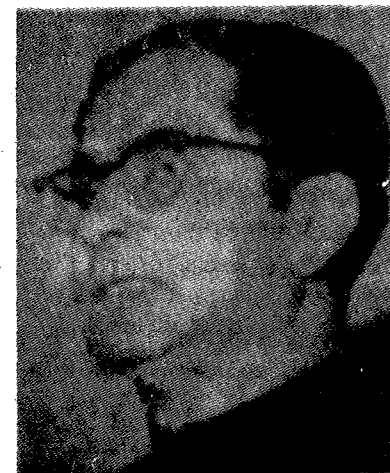
Maulvi Mohammad Farooq



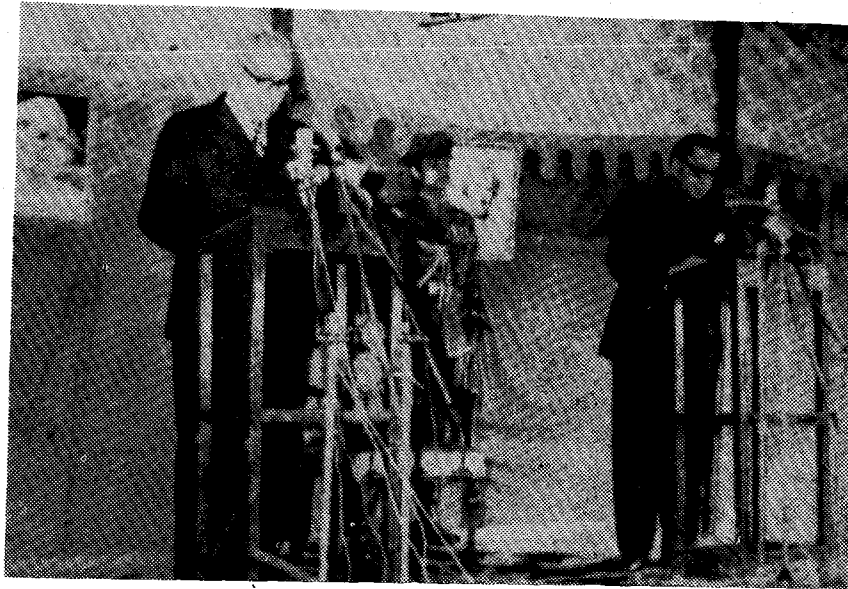
Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beig



The 12 July, 1974—A Historical Protest Rally in Srinagar against the Beig—Parthasarthy talks



Mr. G. Parthasarthy



'Back to power'—Governor Mr. Jha is administering the oath of the office of Chief Minister to S. M. Abdullah on the 5th February, 1975



After the 'KASHMIR ACCORD'—The Shiekh's first Cabenit

a general yardstick of the Administration. Those who fought for twenty years against injustice, opperssion and undemocratic style of Administration imposed by Dogra Rule, the very people, after having gained power, did not hesitate in suppressing with heavy hand any voice that was raised against their misdeeds. Listening to Radio Pakistan was prohibited ; and any preson doubted of listening to it, was arrested alongwith the radio-set. The spread of dismay and hatred amongst the people affected severley the monolithic character of the leadership. The internal lickerings arose and Bakshi Ghulam Mahammad, the then deputy Prime Minister raised his voice against Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and Khawja Ghulam Mohuidin Karra. Mirza Afzal Beg complained that Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, virtually an uneducated person, was put in the chair of Deputy Prime Minister. National Conference General Secretary and member parliament Maulana Mohammad Sayed Masoodi complained against both Mirza Afzal Beg and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. These tendencies for the lust and struggle for power led to the disintegrating tendencies in the ranks of National Conference. Consequently there was a demand that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah should leave and hand over the post of chairmanship of the Conference to someone else. But Sheikh Sahib rejected this demand vehemently, and continued to hold on both the posts. Every leader had his own faction within the ranks of the party, but by virtue of having both, the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad had greater tentacles of influence in the Administration and within the Organisation. Against this whole background the opposition elements planned to show the right place to National Conference Leadership. These opposing elements had gained some sympathies from

Civil and Police Administrations, and through these good offices the opposition managed to plant a 'Time Bomb' in the Cabinet Room where a meeting of the cabinet had to take place. But due to unknown reasons or, perhaps due to the exposure of the plot, this meeting was cancelled. When the 'Time Bomb' bursted, administration became active, and thus khwaja Ali Mohammad Wakil and Mr. Naqi, residents of Srinagar, were immediately arrested. A case was registered against them, and it was decided that the proceedings of the case be held in Srinagar Central Jail itself. The proceedings of the case were yet to begin when both these detenus escaped successfully from Srinagar Central Jail and in a dramatic manner reached Azad Kashmir very safely.

In 1950 it was decided to set up a Constituent Assembly to have control over the insecure situation and a decision was taken to have the Assembly an elected body through adult franchise. But the ruling National Conference headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, did not allow any opposition candidate to contest the elections with the result the ruling party won all the 42 seats in the valley uncontested and only few seats were allowed to be contested in Jammu region. The Constituent Assembly came into being in 1951 and its first session was held on 31st October, 1951 and the strength of the House was kept at 100 out of which 25 seats were kept vacant for Azad Kashmir. There were basic differences between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and New Delhi over the aims and objectives of the Constituent Assembly.

When Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, in his speech, said that the Constituent Assembly was competent to decide the future of Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan

objected to it. Accordingly Pakistan drew the attention of the Security Council and then the Prime Minister of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru declared in the Indian Parliament that the Kashmir Constituent Assembly was in no way competent to decide the future of the State and the Government of India was bound by the resolutions of the United Nations which had sought settlement of the Kashmir issue through a plebiscite. Prime Minister Nehru had also announced that if the Constituent Assembly would make any decision on the future of the State, the Government of India was not bound to accept that decision.

Despite this statement from the Indian Prime Minister, later Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, while speaking in the Constituent Assembly on basic principles, had announced that the State had before it three alternatives, either to accede to Pakistan or remain independent or ratify the accession to India. In his speech he had made it clear that accession with Pakistan was out of question and in view of the geographical and political position it was impossible to remain independent. Therefore, "there was only one alternative before us which was to ratify our accession to India and give it a practical shape". The Constituent Assembly which approved removal of the Dogra dynastic rule and the agrarian reforms of 1949, ultimately adopted a constitution in 1956, ratifying the accession of the Jammu and Kashmir to India. At that time the Sheikh himself was behind the bars in Kud Sub-jail, after his dismissal and arrest in 1953. Earlier in 1952 when New Delhi was not fully confident of the support of the Sheikh and was eager to gain more and more control over the financial, political and administrative machinery of the State.

The National Conference itself was not free from dissensions and in the beginning of 1952 Khwaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra raised a campaign against the party leadership. Political instability continued to dominate the scene when differences between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his associates became severe. The National Conference had started losing its hold among the masses and the change in the outlook of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah too became evident when he addressed a public meeting at the advent of spring where he said "Kashmir is a beautiful garden which is liked by the whole world. The people of Kashmir want that this beautiful garden should become a bridge of friendship and love in the sub-continent between India and Pakistan instead of animosity and hatred".

As the relations between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and New Delhi started getting under more strain, Mr. Nehru came to Srinagar in the spring of 1953 to mitigate the differences, but he did not succeed. On the other hand more and more people would flock to listen to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as prior to this people would not bother to assemble in large numbers to hear the Sheikh. During his public utterances at Ranbir Singhpora, Ganderbal and Khanyar the Sheikh said openly "since India and Pakistan had agreed that people of Kashmir were competent to decide about their fate and future, time had come when they should get the right to decide their future whether they would accede to India or to Pakistan or adopt any other course." The speeches of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah created virtual panic not only in Kashmir but in India and Pakistan too because hitherto the Sheikh had opposed plebiscite in his speeches, statements and announcements. There

was an element of surprise in his latest thinking because even in the UN Security Council the Sheikh had announced that people of Kashmir had aligned their fate with India for ever and there could be no room for reviewing that stand.

During the same period Khwaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra organised a public meeting at Nawakadal about which number of things were being told in public circles. It was believed that Mr. Karra would raise pro-Pakistan slogan or demand independence for Kashmir. Consequently large number of people were present in the public meeting.

When Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah came to know about it, he went secretly to Nawakadal School where he heard Mr. Karra's speech word by word. At the end of his speech Mr. Karra said "I would represent the sentiments of the people and for this, people should clearly speak out what they want?" With one voice the crowd yelled "Pakistan". Soon after Mr. Karra was arrested and sent to jail.

A couple of weeks after this incident the Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, demanded resignation from Mr. Sham Lal Saraf, the then Health Minister in his Cabinet as the rift in the cabinet had widened. Mr. Saraf, who belonged to the anti-Abdullah camp in the National Conference refused to resign which developed new crisis in the cabinet. In this connection Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had a meeting with Dr. Karan Singh, who was the Supreme Ruler. Dr. Karan Singh explained to the Sheikh the constitutional position which meant that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah should submit the resignation of his entire ministry and then, while reconstituting, drop Mr. Sham Lal Saraf. Sheikh

Mohammad Abdullah felt angry and told Dr. Karan Singh that he would also meet the same fate as was met by his father Maharaja Hari Singh. After this Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah consulted leading legal experts which included justice Shahmeri and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg.

In the midst of this crisis Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to Gulmarg for a couple of days' rest. Some top officials were also with him. In his absence his colleagues including some ministers met Dr. Karan Singh where it was decided to remove Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah from power and keep him under detention. In his place, as it was decided, the Deputy Prime Minister, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, be appointed. In this connection New Delhi was consulted and after taking precautionary measures, including keeping the army alert, Mr. Lachman Das Thakur, Superintendent Police, Srinagar was sent to Gulmarg to make arrangements for the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. After strong police force was kept around the bungalow where Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was resting at Gulmarg, he was served the dismissal orders and the warrant of arrest. On early morning of August 9, 1953 he was taken in a van from Gulmarg to Udhampur Tara Niwas. After some time where from he was shifted to Kud Sub-jail, which falls on Srinagar Jammu highway and is 191 kilometres away from Srinagar. This led to the 1953 coup.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's arrest sent a wave of dismay, anger and protest in Kashmir. Adequate police force had been kept at all district headquarters and the armed police force had to open fire against demonstrators at several places in which a number of

people were killed. Complete hartal was observed in the Valley for 11 days. Supporters of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who included some officers, legislators and ministers were put under detention. Most of them were released when they gave assurance of their loyalty to the new regime ; only a few were not released.

LIAQAT ALI KHAN MURDER PLOT

Failing in his political strategy and feeling that the United Nations could not possibly execute the resolutions on Kashmir, Liaqat Ali Khan's approach underwent a change by which one could guess that he wanted to shift from Anglo-American block to Moscow. In some of his speeches he vehemently criticised Britain. Entour to different parts of West Pakistan as the Muslim League President, in October 1951, he went to Rawalpindi where he had to address a public meeting on 16 October, 1951 at Company Bagh, now Liaqat Garden. The rostrum constructed for the purpose was of unusual nature with a singular chair besides the mike. Rest of the stage was left vacant. There were some Muslim League leaders sitting on the rostrum. Liaqat Ali Khan, arriving on appointed time, was accorded a warm welcome and garlanded. Placing my legs downwards, I was sitting on the left side of mike. When Liaqat Ali Khan occupied the chair, Mr. Mohammad Omar, Rawalpindi Muslim League President, read a brief welcome address and requested the Prime Minister to address the gathering. Liaqat Ali Khan, accordingly, came forward to the mike. Scarcely had he opened his speech with the word 'Baradaran-i-Milat'-National Brothern—when he was fired at from the gathering. The bullet, that was followed by another, hit left of his chest. Nobody could imagine that Liaqat Ali Khan

has been shot at. He was silenced after uttering 'Baradaran-i-Milat'. When I looked towards him, I saw a limping Liaqat Ali and a stream of blood pouring out of his chest. This coincided with the sound of stengun firing from the back of the rostrum. The security staff that was posted there in connection with the Prime Minister's arrival had fired in the air. This dramatic and gruesome incident created sensation and large scale disturbance in a twenty thousand strong gathering. People were running, pushing and stampeding others. I for myself had almost lost senses. Finding myself on the ground under the stage, I could not place my fall from the rostrum. When I regained senses, there was silence prevailing all over the Company Bagh. I stood up and was encountered by a strange scene. A dead body whose face was almost disfigured lay encircled by some policemen possessing lathis. This was the corpse of Sayeed Akbar who had shot at the Prime Minister of Pakistan. In a ground where some twenty-five minutes earlier as many as twenty-thousand people were present, lay a corpse surrounded by a contingent of police and small heaps of caps, shoes, sandals and 'dupatas' scattered all over the ground. As I came slowly out of Company Bagh, I saw groups of people proceeding towards Rawalpindi Sadar. On enquiry I was told that wounded Liaqat Ali Khan has been taken to Combined Military Hospital. Joining them, I reached near the hospital at about 8 p.m. Several thousand people were waiting a word from the hospital authorities. At about quarter past eight Nawab Mushtaq Ahmad Gormani, Minister for Kashmir Affairs in the Liaqat Ali Khan Cabinet, came out of the hospital. On reaching the hospital gate, I saw him wiping his tears with a white handkerchief. Without telling anything to anybody he left the place in his car.

People who were dismayed started raising slogans. Soon after, an army doctor came to the hospital gate and announced in a voice choked with grief, "Brothers, we tried our utmost to save the life of the Prime Minister but could not succeed. He has passed away". On hearing this news the crowd cried out. "In a Lillahi wa ina Ilahi Rajaun" and dispersed.

Later, the corpse of Liaqat Ali Khan was taken to Rawalpindi Circuit House. When I reached there at about 10.30 p.m., there were some persons and Government officials on the road-side. Ten minutes later, Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din, Governor General of Pakistan, who was away holidaying at Nathya Gali in Murri, arrived in his car. Parking his car on the road, a weeping Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din went into the Circuit House. Almost half an hour after his arrival, military officers took out the corpse of Liaqat Ali Khan, wrapped in the National Flag, in a stretcher and placed it on an army van which drove to airport. The corpse was taken to Karachi in a special plane where last rites were performed.

On the basis of later developments and changes it can be said that Liaqat Ali Khan was murdered under a well planned scheme. Possibly this murder formed a part of the plan that resulted in mysterious assassinations of Egyptian Prime Minister, Mr. Mehar Pasha in 1945, his successor Nuqrash Pasha in 1948, Iranian Prime minister, General Ali Razm Ara in early 1951 and ruler of East Jordon, Shah Abdullah.

Sayeed Akbar, the murderer of Liaqat Ali Khan, was originally an Afghan who belonged to Babrak tribe. He was not an ordinary person. Informations which I gathered about him reveal that he had attempted

two British-backed abortive coups in Afghanistan. Failing in his designs, he flew to British India where he was granted political asylum and a monthly allowance. After partition, Pakistan Government continued his allowance which in 1951 was eleven hundred rupees per month. Some restrictions, however, were imposed on his movements. Before going out of Abbottabad, where he resided, he was to drop a word with the concerned police station. On 12 October, Sayeed Akbar informed the concerned police station that he was going to Murri for some days. When he left Abbottabad for Murri he was accompanied by his six-year old son. After two days, stay at Murri he secretly went to Rawalpindi and stayed in a hotel. Perhaps he was aware of the arrival of Liaqat Ali Khan on the following day. According to the preliminary police investigations Sayeed Akbar, keeping his son in the hotel, left for Company Bagh at 3 p.m. on 16 October. As per police reports, he possessed a revolver of British make. Clad in a traditional Pathan atirewhite 'chadar'—he sat in the front row. No sooner did Liaqat Ali Khan came to mike and people turn their eyes towards him than Sayeed Akbar repeatedly shot at him. Immediately after this, the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Rawalpindi, Najaf Khan, who was standing by the rostrum, fired into the head of Sayeed Akbar. He fell in the ground and people kicked him while the policemen burst lathis on him. His face was disfigured and clothes torn into pieces. Najaf Khan definitely killed Sayeed Akbar under a pre-planned scheme so as to make 'Liaqat Ali Khan murder plot leak-proof'. This theory draws support in the action of promoting DSP Najaf Khan to the post of Deputy Inspector General of Police on special recommendations of Malik Ghulam Mohammad, the new Governor-General.

This mysterious and meaningful murder was followed by dramatic changes in Pakistan. Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din and Malik Ghulam Mohammad were appointed Prime Minister and Governor-General respectively. Kashmir Affairs Minister, Nawab Mushtaq Ahmad Gormani, was given Home portfolio. Misusing the post of Governor-General, Malik Ghulam Mohammad surreptitiously dismissed the Nazim-ud-Din Ministry and appointed Mohammad Ali Bogra, the then Pakistan Ambassador in Washington, as the new Prime Minister. This action on the part of Malik Ghulam Mohammad is a sufficient proof to hold that a hand of Anglo-American bloc secretly worked in Liaqat Ali Khan's murder. Since relations between Mr. Gormani and Chowdary Ghulam Abbas were sour, the former, soon after the assassination of Liaqat Ali Khan, managed the dismissal of the latter's government and appointment of Mirwaiz Maulana Mohammad Yusuf as the caretaker President of 'Azad Kashmir' Government. Liaqat Ali Khan's murder not only resulted in continuous political instability in Pakistan but also had its impact on Kashmir issue. In 'Azad Kashmir' too, rulers started changing one after another. The Government of Mirwaiz was dismissed after 11 months in office and Colonel Sher Ahmad Khan was appointed as the new President. When Chowdary Mohammad Ali took over as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, he, on the advice of Chowdary Ghulam Abbas, replaced Sher Ahmad by Sardar Qayoom. Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suharvardi, after assuming Prime Ministership of Pakistan in place of Chowdary Mohammad Ali, dismissed Qayoom Government and appointed Mr. K.H. Khursheed as the President of Azad Kashmir. Field Marshal Ayub Khan, in the capacity of new ruler of Pakistan, again appointed Sardar Qayoom as the

President in place of Mr. Khursheed. After General Yahya Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to power in Pakistan. He dismissed Sadar Qayoom and vested the reigns of power in the hands of Sardar Mohammad Ibrahim. When General Zia-ul-Haq overthrew Mr. Bhutto on 5 July 1977, he dismissed Sardar Ibrahim and handed over Azad Kashmir affairs to Brigadier Mohammad Hayat Khan.

ARMED REBELLION IN AZAD KASHMIR

Frequent change in Azad Kashmir Governments and the Kashmir issue remaining unsolved created resentment in large sections of Azad Kashmir people and a demand for a representative government that could take positive steps to solve the Kashmir issue gained momentum. Some prominent Muslim Conference leaders mooted a proposal that Pakistan Government should recognise the elected Government of Azad Kashmir and later on try to secure its recognition from other countries. But Pakistan did not see eye to eye with this proposal. Appointment of Sher Ahmed Khan, who was a subedar in British Army, as the head of the Azad Kashmir Government, after elevating him to the post of honorary Colonel, was particularly acceptable to none. His government could not draw support from any political section of the masses and leaders of the Muslim Conference strongly objected to the formation of such a government. In the early days of 1954, a confronting situation started between the President of Azad Kashmir, Colonel Sher Ahmed Khan and his opponents which took a serious turn with an attempt to arrest an opposition leader, Sher Dil Khan.

Sher Dil Khan came as usual from his village to offer Friday prayers at the Jama Masjid of Palandari town. When he entered the mosque he saw it surrounded by police. On coming out of the mosque, he

was served with an arrest warrant by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Palandari. No sooner did he show the warrant than Sher Dil Khan took out his pistol and fired at him. He also fired two rounds in the air. The Deputy Superintendent of Police, sustaining injury, fell on the ground while other policemen took to their heels.

The District Magistrate of Palandari, Mr. Inayat Maula, took a serious note of it and tried to contact Muzaffarabad for instructions. Meanwhile Sher Dil Khan with some of his associates declared an armed rebellion. When they moved towards Palandari District Headquarters, they were joined by Azad Kashmir Armed Police. Right in the start, the rebels raided the jail and after freeing all the inmates, proceeded towards District Magistrate's office. The District Magistrate somehow succeeded in fleeing to Rawalpindi. The rebels captured the District Headquarter and announced the formation of a parallel government. They simultaneously blocked two important roads of Kohala and Kahota that join Poonch District with Pakistan.

When the news of these developments reached Pakistan, the Home Ministry ordered the Army camp stationed at Kahota to march towards Poonch via Murri and suppress the rebellion. The army with Punjab Armed Constabulary reached in the interior parts of the troubled area. At several places a severe battle took place between the Army and the rebels. Having limited manpower and ammunition, the rebels were overpowered by the army which regained control of the entire area including the District Headquarter.

Nevertheless, Sher Dil Khan did not surrender. He retreated, alongwith some of his one hundred fifty

supporters, to the Baral Fort near Palandari where fighting continued for two days between the army and the fortified rebels. The number of casualties was not made public. However, even after the Baral Fort was recaptured, the army could not find out Sher Dil Khan. After restoring law and order, the government carried out a house to house search and seized a large quantity of ammunition. Property of several people was confiscated and auctioned at the District Headquarter under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner of Palandari, Mr. Abdul Rehman Salim. About two weeks after the area returned to normalcy, I was deputed by the Kashmir Editors' Conference to make an on the spot assessment of the situation at Palandari. When I reached Palandari I saw an atmosphere of fear and terror prevailing throughout. The Assistant Commissioner ordered one of his subordinates to lead me to the hospital. The hospital was crowded with wounded which included mostly women. I was told that the army, after the recapture of Baral Fort, went in search of Sher Dil Khan to his ancestral village but could not trace him out. However, his home, including property and cattle, was blown up with a dynamite. About one and a half thousand people were arrested in connection with the rebellion and lodged in different jails. The Governments of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir strongly kept all these developments behind the curtain. Publication of all those reports which certain newspapers somehow collected was also banned. Several Kashmiri leaders presented a memorandum to the Governor-General of Pakistan regarding these developments. They were assured of an investigation but neither an investigation was ordered nor any action was taken against those responsible for committing excesses on the people of the area.

8

KASHMIR—A POLICE STATE

The dismissal of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, his detention and agitation on a massive scale had its impact on Pakistan. The then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Mohammad Ali Bogra, invited some leaders of Azad Kashmir to discuss the situation in Kashmir so that if needed some step could be taken in this connection. At the Karachi meeting, which was attended by Mr. Bogra, his cabinet colleagues, Ch. Ghulam Abbas, Mirwaiz Moulvi Mohammad Yusuf, Sardar Mohammad Ibrahim and Azad Kashmir President, Sher Ahmed Khan, Ch. Abbas suggested that five to ten thousand trained soldiers, in civil clothes, should launch a war in Kashmir. He also suggested that these trained soldiers should enter Kashmir through Titwal, Kotli and Uri areas to force India to settle the Kashmir question.

But Mr Bogra and other Pakistani leaders rejected the proposal of Ch. Abbas on the plea that the Pakistani Prime Minister would take up the Kashmir issue with the Indian Prime Minister. It was revealed in the conference that the Indian Prime Minister had invited Mr. Bogra to New Delhi and had expressed readiness to discuss the Kashmir issue and Mr. Bogra was leaving for New Delhi within Next few days where he would discuss the problem. Ch. Abbas left the conference in

a huff whereas other leaders including Mirwaiz Moulvi Mohammad Yusuf, Sardar Ibrahim and Sher Ahmed Khan agreed on the suggestion for talks with the Indian Government.

Ch. Ghulam Abbas returned from Karachi without informing the Government of Pakistan and when the Government came to know about it, the instructions were issued to Punjab Government. Accordingly, on reaching Lahore the Deputy Inspector General of Police showed an order to Ch. Abbas which had placed restrictions on him from making any statement about Kashmir and from holding any public meeting. Ch. Abbas promised to abide by the order and went straight to Sialkot from Lahore.

In the last week of August, Pakistan Prime Minister, Mr. Mohammad Ali Bogra, came to New Delhi, on the invitation of the Indian Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, to discuss the Kashmir issue. After three days' prolonged discussion a joint communique was issued which said that the two sides agreed on solving the Kashmir dispute through free and impartial plebiscite. Despite this declaration there were no signs of an early settlement of future of Kashmir.

The State Government headed by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad received heavy financial aid from the centre so that he could succeed in building public opinion in favour of India. Though Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad was not much educated, he had the talent and the quality which are found rarely in politicians. He tried to create a new atmosphere through his talent and dynamism. Whoever was to be purchased with money was won over, whoever was to be won over by suitable posts, they were offered to them and those who rejected both money and

posts were imprisoned. Shadows of fear, terror and pressure started looming large in the valley and the region was virtually converted into a police state. The net of detectives and intelligence people was widened and for undertaking beating of opponents a special police wing under the name of Peace Brigade was given wide powers. Implementation of law remained in name only and the police could arrest any person anywhere it liked and the courts were made subservient to the police officers. The result was that whole population remained terror-stricken. The intelligence net-work was introduced in jails too to keep a watch on the activities of the political prisoners. These detectives were deliberately put inside the jails in the garb of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's supporters and this way they could be in the inner circles of the political prisoners and report back to the Government about their day to day thinking.

In 1955 Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg was released when the Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's detectives reports revealed that his release would prove politically advantageous for the Bakshi. He was released during the August 1955. After his release Mr. Beg announced formation of Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front. The decision to set up this front had been taken by Mr. Beg when he was inside the jail after consultations with his colleagues and this move had been discussed by him with his outside associates after his release also. The Bakshi took the announcement of Mr. Beg as his (Bakshi's) success and an instrument for consolidating his position. It was so because some influential politicians in New Delhi including the Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru did not agree that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his associates were demanding cessation of Kashmir's links with India. But Mr. Beg's demand for

plebiscite and setting up of an organisation for this purpose was in consonance with the motives of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad.

After the achievement of his aim the Bakshi rearrested Mr. Beg and Mr. Abdul Gani Goni, who belonged to Doda district of Jammu, was appointed acting President of the Plebiscite Front. After some time Mr. Goni too was arrested but through the mediation of some persons Mr. Goni joined the Bakshi camp. He was, however, kept in the jail as was assigned some special duties inside the jail and after having completed them, he was released. A couple of weeks after his release, Mr. Goni joined the National Conference. In place of Mr. Goni a leading trader, Munshi Mohammad Ishaq was installed as acting President of the Front. On the international scene after the failure of Mr. Dixon, another mediator, Dr. Frank Graham, was sent by the UN Security Council to mediate between India and Pakistan in the Kashmir dispute but he, too, did not succeed in his mission.

In the year 1956, the Soviet President, Mr. Bulganin, and the Prime Minister, Mr Khrushchev came on an official tour of India. They also visited Kashmir and in their speeches at New Delhi and Srinagar declared their fullest support to the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir with India. In December 1956, the UN Security Council meeting was again held at the request of Pakistan to consider the Kashmir issue. After prolonged discussions and debate a four power resolution was moved in the council which proposed the replacement of the Indian and Pakistan armed forces in the State of Jammu and Kashmir by the United Nations' forces to maintain law and order in the area and assist

to hold a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the people as to whether they wanted to remain with India or accede to Pakistan.

The four power resolution was passed by all but one vote in the 11 member Security Council. The Soviet Union exercised her veto against the resolution. After few days a modified resolution on Kashmir was moved in the Council which was again vetoed by the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, another resolution asking the then President of the Security Council, Mr. Yaring, to go to the Indian Sub-continent for negotiations and to try to find out a way for the implementation of the UN Resolutions, was passed by the Council. Mr. Yaring came for his assigned job but like his predecessors failed in his moves.

Inside Kashmir Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad worked successfully on three fronts. His first front was in New Delhi where with money and gifts he managed to create a pro-Bakshi lobby comprising Congress leaders including influential members of Parliament. And the members of this front worked for the Bakshi in New Delhi. The second front on which he worked was to create a proper political image for himself in the State and within three years he had tightened his grip on the political and administrative machinery of the State. The third front in which also he succeeded was to keep alive anti-India campaign in the State. He knew that if the elements, who were struggling against India, turned weak it would result in weakening his power which could end also. Conscious of it he kept on financing, though secretly, some people of the Plebiscite Front and the Political Conference. Some other Pro-Pakistani elements too received liberal financial help from him.

He told me many times "existence of such elements was necessary otherwise New Delhi will do anything here it liked."

On the other side Mr. Nehru was annoyed over continued detention of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and he would talk to the Bakshi about it but Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad would avoid it by saying that the time for his release had not yet come.

As it happened after 1947, the way the unity in the National Conference was being broken, so it started happening after 1953 when also attempts were made to see the unity in the party ruptured. The result of these moves saw Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq locked in political differences. They had reached the verge of parting of their ways. In 1957 the elections to the State Assembly were held. (These elections were simply a formality because out of 42 seats the National Conference won 40 seats unopposed as nomination papers of all opposite candidates were rejected.) And these elections widened the rift between Mr. Sadiq and Mr. Bakshi resulting in another division of the National Conference—one was headed by the Bakshi and the other by Mr. Sadiq. Three ministers in the Cabinet, headed by the Bakshi, joined the Sadiq camp. They were Mt. G. L. Dogra, Mr. D. P. Dhar and Syed Mir Qasim. The speaker of the Assembly, Mr. G. R. Reenzy also joined the Sadiq camp. They formed Democratic National Conference as a parallel body whose aims, objectives and goals were announced on October 20, 1957 in Srinagar. The DNC opposed all the policies of the Bakshi except the one that supported Kashmir's accession to India. It also demanded release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Bakshi Ghulam

Mohammad knew well that this demand was being raised at the instance of New Delhi in which Mr. Nehru's rule was prominent.

During this time, Mr. Nehru came to Srinagar on the pretext of studying the flood situation in the valley. His visit in July 1957 was after a gap of four and a half years. When he stepped out of the aeroplane at the Srinagar airport, he looked sad and sullen. He showed unconcern towards the state officials who had gone to receive him, and silently boarded a car to reach the official Guest House. Next day the Bakshi organised a rally of selected National Conference workers where Mr. Nehru candidly said "I am extremely sorry for the separation of my dear friend, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, I am proud of this thing that I can convince world's great politicians but it is a matter of regret that I could not convince Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. May be in this matter I may have some shortcoming but I do not want the gap between we and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to get wide. I am desirous of narrowing down this gap."

Mr. Nehru's expression of such ideas sent a wave of demoralisation in the Bakshi camp which kept mum. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad had number of meetings with Mr. Nehru where they discussed various issues. The Bakshi later gave the impression that he was forced to agree on various matters. In November 1957 the Bakshi went to New Delhi where he met Mr. Nehru and when he saw the Indian Prime Minister adamant on seeing Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah released, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad assured him that he would release the Sheikh after a couple of weeks.

After returning to Srinagar the Bakshi discussed the question of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's release with his close advisers and trusted friends and ordered that arrangements on political and administrative level be made to tackle the situation that might arise out of the Sheikh's release. The Cabinet, which met during last week of December, decided to release Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and accordingly he was released from the Kud Jail on January 8, 1958. The Sheikh came to Srinagar via Banihal and he was given rousing reception everywhere despite Government's restrictions, pressure and terror. Without any fear for being arrested and despite police pressure people, in large numbers, came out to greet the Sheikh wherever he went, in rural and urban areas. It appeared that the entire population of the valley had come out to welcome him.

The Sheikh's release and the warmest reception he got in Srinagar virtually left the ruling National Conference as a destitute. The response the Sheikh got at mammoth public meetings caused some anxiety to the Bakshi as well as to the centre. The local press was placed under strict control and the newsmen, who had come from outside to cover Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's speeches, were kept in the Nedous and Oberoi Palace hotels. They were entertained lavishly; they were bribed so that they would not give the real picture.

In the third week of January the Bakshi returned to Srinagar from Jammu, after a brief halt there, and I went to his house to find only an atmosphere of dismay and anxiety. There one Mr. Noor-ud-Din Sofi from Ganderbal told me that nobody would enter premises of the Bakshi's residence where before the release of

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah hundreds of people would come to seek his help in many ways. The day I was at his residence there were only 12 persons present out of which six were top police officers including the Inspector General of Police, Mr. W.D. Mehra, and the rest were the employees of the official residence of the Prime Minister.

Despite this the Bakshi did not lose courage. He announced organising a function in connection with the Republic Day on January 26. The National Conference took out a procession on this day from the Mujahid Manzil and the processionists mainly comprised Government employees, industrial workers and party workers and supporters. When the procession ended at Lal Chowk there were about 20,000 to 25,000 people who listened to the Bakshi's speech.

After spending six days in Srinagar the Bakshi left for Jammu. Before leaving for Jammu a plan to organise disruption on a big scale in the valley was finalised under his guidance so that a base for Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's rearrest could be built. From different telegraph offices in Srinagar thousands of telegrams were sent to the Indian Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister wherein Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's rearrest was demanded since the situation in the valley was "grave". The expenses on these telegrams were borne out of the special fund which had been set up to combat Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in many ways. Under the plan to stage disruption the organisers engineered clashes between the National Conference and the Plebiscite Front supporters in both rural and urban areas. It was also decided to create disturbance and violence during Sheikh Mohammad

Abdullah's speech at the Hazratbal shrine during the Mairaj-ul-Nabi function. It was also decided to get three supporters of National Conference killed and hold the Plebiscite Front Responsible for the murder.

And on Friday when thousands of people from the city and the villages started congregating at the Hazratbal shrine one could see the Central Reserve Police personnel on duty everywhere. Supporters of the Bakshi were outside the shrine to collect funds for the Auqaf whereas the police was meant to maintain law and order. After the Nimaz and the Sheikh's speech, clashes took place and people started running through land and water routes. About 38 persons were injured in these clashes and hooliganism and it was alleged that 10 persons received injuries as a result of merciless police beating.

Out of the three supporters of the ruling National Conference who were to be, under the plan formulated earlier, killed, only one supporter, Mohi-ud-Din Bandey was stabbed to death. This person was an employee in the special police, whose entire record was kept a secret. Two other persons, who were to be killed, rather sacrificed, were Ali Mohammad and Mohammad Yusuf. They could not be located in the midst of clashes and confusion. So the onus for this one murder was put on the shoulders of 36 leading leaders of the Plebiscite Front including Maulana Mohammad Syed Masoodi and Sofi Mohammad Akbar. All these persons were arrested. Out of this 18 persons were charged with creating disturbances at Hazratbal and the murder of Mohi-ud-Din and a case was registered against them the hearing for which was held inside the Srinagar Central Jail. Maulana Mohammad Syed Masoodi and his associates appeared before the court as "murders".

During this period the Bakshi got the intelligence reports that Miss Mirdula Sarabai, who was a leading woman leader of the Congress and who had gained prominence because of her interest in the Kashmir affairs, was coming to Srinagar with some communication from the Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, and her attempts might bring about a meetings between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mr. Nehru. The Bakshi became somewhat more worried over this development and he got Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah rearrested between April 29-30 to put to end any possibility of a meeting between the Sheikh and Mr. Nehru. The Sheikh was again kept under detention at Kud and when the news of his detention spread, it shocked the people. Since the government had posted heavy police contingents at every focal point in rural and urban areas, there could be no possibility of any protest or agitation. The National Conference leaders had threatened that those shopkeepers who tried to pull down their shutters, in protest against the detention of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, their shops would be looted. And in the Zainakadal area couple of shops were looted after their locks were broken.

After one week's of the Sheikh's rearrest the AICC session was held in New Delhi and the Delhi Papers had reported that the Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, had in the working Committee session, threatened to resign from his post because he was being kept in dark about various important matters. An Indian Government source had revealed the plan for rearresting Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had been implemented by the Bakshi in collaboration with the Union Home Minister, Mr. Pant, and Mr. Nehru was not happy over this development.

After the Sheikh's rearrest the Kashmir Police submitted a plan which involved Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his close associates in overthrowing the State Government in collaboration with Pakistan. Sanction was obtained from Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad to register a conspiracy case against the Sheikh and his associates. The outline of this case had been prepared by the Central Intelligence Bureau and Kashmir Police Officers. Sheikh Ghulam Qadir Ganderbali, Superintendent Police, Pt. Gopi Nath Kotru, DIG CID and others were from the Kashmir police who planned the outline of the case.

And now the Bakshi was fighting on only two fronts. The one was with the Democratic National Conference and the other was those forces in New Delhi who were not reconciled to the policies of the Bakshi. But he made New Delhi to agree on launching a conspiracy case against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his associates. After getting the green signal from New Delhi a conspiracy case was registered on May 21, 1958.

In the first instance the State Government avoided implicating the Sheikh in this case and the former Revenue Minister, Mirza Afzal Beg, was the top of the list of the accused. The hearing was to be held at Jammu and the Government appointed a week judge, Pt. Nilkanth Hak, to try the case. It is worth mentioning here that the name of the judge who was hearing the case was given out to be Mr. N.K. Haque whereas his real name was Mr. N.K. Hak. After a couple of week's initial hearing Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's name too was included in the list of the accused and he was transferred from Kud to Jammu so that he could appear before the special court during the hearing. The

hearing was conducted in the premises of the Jammu Central Jail and all the accused were lodged in that jail. Lot of money was being spent on the case. The witness in this case were mostly from Kashmir police and the persons who used to be sent to Pakistan for spying. Despite these efforts the Bakshi could neither convince Mr. Nehru nor could he become a strong ruler.

The Democratic National Conference was crying loud against the Bakshi and the Kashmiri Pandits too were not happy with him. The growing opposition from the Kashmiri Pandits were somewhat intolerable for Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad who would often tell me "Look what I have not done for India and despite this the Hindus are not happy with me." On the other side Mr. Nehru continued to express dissatisfaction and under his pressure the Bakshi agreed to take back the leaders of the Democratic National Conference in the National Conference and give them ministerial posts.

On December 5, 1960 the Democratic National Conference was dissolved and Mr. G.M. Sadiq and his associates once again joined the Bakshi camp. The result of this reunion was that Mr. Sadiq, Mr. D.P. Dhar, Mr. G.L. Dogra and Syed Mir Qasim were included in the cabinet. Their inclusion in the Cabinet was necessary because the Assembly elections were approaching and no opposition had the guts to fight the elections successfully. Mr. D.P. Dhar had made Mr. Sadiq to agree for the reunion on the plea that Mr. Nehru would not like the Bakshi to continue as the Prime Minister. Mr. Nehru had suggested to the Bakshi to work outside the State as he had been the Prime Minister of the State for a long time. He was even offered the post of Union Minister for Home affairs. But the Bakshi neatly brushed aside the matter and himself supervised the

1962 Assembly elections in which he managed to get his close associates elected. This time the elections were just a formality as out of 42 seats there was no contest on 38 seats in the valley. Those who wanted to contest against the ruling National Conference candidates were either educated or given temptation and others' nomination papers were rejected. This way the Bakshi made the arrangement for keeping his Government in power and after the new Ministry was sworn in, Mr. Nehru came to Kashmir on July 4, 1962. During his one week stay he met, besides the Bakshi, all the Bakshi's colleagues and associates individually and discussed with them the issue of change of leadership in Kashmir. Mr. S.N. Fotedar, who was the Chairman of the Legislative Council, told me "it looks that the Government headed by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad has completed its days because Mr. Nehru is adamant on seeing change in the leadership for getting Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah released so that a fresh dialogue could be started with him."

Mr. Nehru stayed in Srinagar for eight days but the Bakshi and his supporters could not agree on change of leadership. And about three months later, on October 21, 1962 China launched a war on India and her marching army captured NEFA and some areas of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir State. It appeared that the Chinese would gain control on whole of Assam but China unilaterally announced the ceasefire. The Chinese attack became a cause of concern in the subcontinent and it hit hard the political image of Mr. Nehru. After a brief period of the ceasefire, New Delhi witnessed heavy diplomatic activities. As a result of these activities two top diplomats from the United States and Britain, Mr. Averil Hariman and Mr. Duncan Sands, arrived in New Delhi where they

met Mr. Nehru and other leaders. The talks continued for four days. On November 28, 1962 Mr. Duncan Sands left New Delhi for Rawalpindi where he met Pakistan President, General Mohammad Ayub Khan. That very evening Mr. Sands returned to New Delhi and on the next day, November 29, 1962, a joint statement was issued simultaneously from Rawalpindi and New Delhi which said that the two countries had agreed to hold talks for solving the Kashmir issue. In this connection Mr. Nehru made a statement in the Parliament on November 30 in which he said that the talks between the two sides were being started on the ministerial level.

However, the real background of Mr. Hariman and Mr. Duncan Sands' mission was in relation with a secret understanding between China and Pakistan over Kashmir. Before the Chinese attack Peking had, after taking into confidence President Ayub, told him to send Pakistani troops into Kashmir and capture the Valley. Everything had been decided between President Ayub and the Chinese leaders on the way of gaining control over the Valley. Soon after the Chinese invasion President Ayub had convened a secret session of the National Assembly where he secured approval for the plan. Since Pakistan was a member of the CENTO, President Ayub thought it advisable to inform other members about the plan and talked separately to the ambassadors of Turkey, Iran, America and Britain in Pakistan. After these meetings the ambassadors informed their countries but the revelation gave birth to anxiety in America and Britain. The two Governments immediately assured President Ayub that if Pakistan remained impartial in the war between India and China, America and Britain would, through mediations settle the Kashmir issue. President Ayub,

after consulting top military advisers, accepted the Anglo-American offer and when China announced unilateral ceasefire, America and Britain immediately started the mission for a dialogue between India and Pakistan on Kashmir.

As a result of the efforts of Mr. Averil Hariman and Mr. Duncan Sands a high-level Indian delegation, led by Mr. Swaran Singh, Minister for External Affairs, reached Rawalpindi on September 26, 1962 where Bhutto-Swaran Singh talks on Kashmir started. Mr. Z.A. Bhutto was then Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Minister. The talks continued for several months and the two sides put forth different and contrary suggestions for setting the Kashmir issue. And the exchange of ideas too continued. At one stage army officers were consulted on the plan for division of Kashmir and Pakistan was adamant on getting whole of the Valley upto the Banihal tunnel and allow India to have whole of Jammu Division of Kashmir plan too was discussed which aimed at discussing the fixation of river Jehlum as the boundaries between India and Pakistan. Perhaps nobody will agree that in Srinagar non-Muslims, whose houses were situated on the western bank of the river Jehlum, started selling their property because they had come to believe that the eastern part of the city would remain with India while the western part was to go to Pakistan. But these prolonged talks too failed and the issue continued to hang in its old form.

After the failure of the talks, Mr. Nehru came twice to Srinagar during June-July 1963 and it looked that he was keen to find any kind of solution of the problem. During his stay in Srinagar he had talks with Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and his colleagues and associates. When Mr. Nehru came in July he addressed

a big public meeting in Lal Chowk where he outwardly described the demand for right of self-determination as a joke but inwardly was trying to smoothen the way for holding talks with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. When he did not see any tangible result of his efforts he felt annoyed and left for Pahalgam and the Bakshi along with his top advisers too reached Pahalgam. When at Pahalgam the Bakshi went to meet Mr. Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister let loose his spleen on him and in an angry mood he said to him (Bakshi) "I am going to Jammu via Banihal route so that I can hold talks with Sheikh Abdullah in the jail." This made the Bakshi somewhat nervous and after coming back to his Bungalow he held talks with his advisers upto 10 O'clock in the night and then again met Mr. Nehru. The Bakshi assured Mr. Nehru that within one month he would make arrangements so that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah take initiative and sent a letter to Mr. Nehru which would pave way for some talks. Mr. Nehru after expressing his satisfaction over this assurance left for New Delhi next day. And only after 10 days the Bakshi was summoned to New Delhi where Mr. Nehru told him that Mr. K. Kamraj had proposed a plan for improving the image of Congress Party and the Government. According to the plan top officials including central ministers and Chief Ministers of the States, while affirming their faith in the leadership of Mr. Nehru would handover their resignation to him. "You can also strengthen my hands by submitting your resignation. This would help me in building a new political atmosphere". However, Mr. Bakshi was confident that perhaps his resignation will not be accepted. During the conversation according to Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, Mr. Nehru said, "I fully know that things will not work in Kashmir without you". The Bakshi expressed his support in front of

Mr. Nehru half heartedly and returned to Srinagar on the third day. In Srinagar he consulted his close associates and he told me that nobody agreed that he should resign. His associates had advised him that he was not bound to resign under the Kamraj Plan because he was not a Congress Chief Minister.

The Bakshi remained in a dilemma ; on one hand he had assured Mr. Nehru that he would send his resignation and on the other hand he felt suspicious. At last he got his resignation letter typed out and kept it in his pocket and left for New Delhi. People in Kashmir were unaware of all that was happening between Srinagar and Delhi. In New Delhi too the Bakshi consulted his friends. August 24-25, 1963 were fixed for the meeting of the Congress Working Committee. The resignation of all Central Ministers and Chief Ministers had reached Mr. Nehru and now it was the turn for the Bakshi only.

Unwillingly the Bakshi handed over his resignation to Mr. Nehru on the evening of August 23, 1963 during his brief meeting with him. Mr. Nehru also invited Mr. Bakshi to attend the Congress Working Committee session next day as a special invitee. On August 25, 1963, during the Congress Working Committee session, Mr. Nehru announced the names of leaders whose resignations were accepted under the Kamraj Plan. The list surprisingly included Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's name and the Chief Minister of Punjab, Mr. Partap Singh Kairon and the Union Finance Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai. How the Bakshi might have felt the announcement ? I cannot say anything. But it became known that the Bakshi announced in the same meeting having joined the Congress and after payment of 25 paise became its member.

After a couple of days the Bakshi returned to Srinagar where his supporters pressed for withdrawal of his resignation. But it was not in the hand of the Bakshi to withdraw his resignation because it was the question of prestige of the Indian Prime Minister who had, through persuasion and dramatic way, removed the Bakshi from the Government under the Kamraj Plan. Who after the Bakshi ? This was the main question ?

Mr. Nehru wanted Mr. G.M. Sadiq to succeed Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad so that he could implement the real plan of Nehru. The Bakshi knew it and he sent a personal letter to the Indian Prime Minister in which he sought permission to withdraw the conspiracy case against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and set him free. In his reply Mr. Nehru informed the Bakshi that such matters could not be decided in haste and he did not like any step which was taken in a hurry.

This reply dismayed the Bakshi and he decided that he would not allow Mr. Sadiq to succeed him. He organised and unified the party for achieving this objective. He carried the decision of the party, that the legislature party should have the right to choose its leader, to New Delhi where he made Mr. Nehru to agree on this proposal. On coming back to Srinagar he proposed names of four candidates for succeeding him and they were Bakshi Abdul Rashid, Mr. Shams-ud-Din, Mr. G.L. Dogra and Mr. G.M. Rajpuri. After consulting his advisers the Bakshi picked up Mr. Shams-ud-Din as his successor. And on October 11, 1963 Mr. Shams-ud-Din was appointed the Prime Minister. He was simply a dummy. The Bakshi remained Chairman of the State Planning Commission. As Commission Chairman he kept the office, which was meant for the

Prime Minister, in the Secretariat, with him. The name plate was changed from the Prime Minister to the Chairman Planning Commission. He even selected ministers for the new Cabinet which was headed by Shams-ud-Din. Mr. G.M. Sadiq, Mr. D.P. Dhar, Sayed Mir Qasim and Mr. G.L. Dogra refused to join the Cabinet. This way the strings of the Government were controlled by the Bakshi and Mr. Shams-ud-Din was the Prime Minister only in name. Nobody knew that time what was in store for the future. Who could know that powerful and mysterious hands of Nature were shaping a new development.

9

HOLY RELIC MOVEMENT

During the night of December 26-27, 1963, the holy Relic was stolen from the Hazratbal Shrine. Like a fire in forest the news spread in the Valley and this brought new vigour to the dull life in Kashmir. It appeared as if the volcano, which had been silenced by force, repression, tyranny and excesses, had erupted suddenly. And one could not foretell what would be the impact of this lava in the Valley which in the midst of a revolutionary atmosphere witnessed the beginning of an agitation on December 27, 1963. A big procession was taken out on December 28, 1963 in the Srinagar City and when it turned towards the Residency Road, a jeep carrying Bakshi Abdul Rashid, General Secretary of National Conference, approached the processionists. Bakshi Abdul Rashid tried to address the demonstrators but suddenly a "Kangri" (fire pot) was hurled at the jeep and the smouldering ashes mingled in air. The demonstrators attacked the jeep and Bakshi Abdul Rashid felt nervous and ran away. This small incident directed the entire course of the agitation against Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and the jeep which carried Bakshi Abdul Rashid was burnt to ashes in Lal Chowk. The agitators then set on fire the two cinema houses, Amresh and Regal theatres, owned by a brother of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. The demonstrators then went to burnt the radio station which was an "instrument of

making false propaganda. Before they could execute this plan, the entire station building was surrounded by Central Reserve Police men.

The Bakshi was not in Srinagar and the heat of flames of anger that had risen in Kashmir had been felt in New Delhi. The Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, himself assured in a special Radio broadcast on the evening of December 28, 1963, Kashmir Muslims that the matter would be investigated properly and whosoever was found guilty of this mischief would not escape severe penalty. This appeal from Mr. Nehru had no impact and the agitation was assuming serious dimensions. Next day the Prime Minister again in a radio broadcast repeated his assurances and said that since Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad had reached Srinagar the real culprit would be nabbed shortly. This added fuel to the fire and the Government of India was forced to send one ICS officer, Mr. Vishwanathan, the then Home Secretary, to Srinagar for tackling the situation. Number of Central Intelligence Bureau Officers including its head, Mr. B.N. Mullick, too arrived in Srinagar and they started their campaign to find the clue to the theft of the holy Relic in collaboration with the Kashmir police.

Complete hartal continued in Kashmir and police reinforcement was called from outside. The police opened fire at three places, Badshah Chowk, KMD bus yard and Sarai Bala, in which number of people were killed and dozens injured. It appeared as the entire administration was in the hands of the people. Government employees, officers and the National Conference workers and leaders had retired in their cells. And during this period Dr. Farooq Abdullah, son of Sheikh

Mohammad Abdullah, went to Ganderbal from where he brought Maulana Mohammad Sayed Masoodi to lead the "public army" which had carried along everything in its tide. The people did not know who was the leader of the movement and a section of the public went to the Mirwaiz Manzil from where they brought the 18 year old Moulvi Farooq, who had been made acting Mirwaiz by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad after the death of his father Moulvi Mohammad Amin. When Moulvi Farooq came in the public in a jeep carrying black flags, he simply wept: he could not address the public as he was too young to do that. There was no name to the leadership and when the newsmen wanted to file their reports about the agitation, they had one problem because they did not know under whose leadership the agitation was continuing. Mr. J.N. Sadhu, Indian Express, Correspondent, suggested that newsmen should write that the agitation was being run by an Action Committee. When this news appeared in New Delhi newspapers, the people in Kashmir owned the name of "Action Committee".

Though after the December 28 horrible incident there did not take place any act or incident of repression or excesses in the city and the villages, yet peoples' zeal for proper enquiry into holy Relic theft case and its restoration continued. Every morning processions were taken out wherein recovery of the stolen holy Relic was demanded.

After his arrival in Srinagar, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad discussed the situation with police and civil officers and ordered that political leaders should be arrested. Those who were arrested included Mr. Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra, Khawaja Sadar-ud-Din Mujahid, Maulana Yasin Hamdani and other leaders of the Plebis-

cite Front. When newsmen asked the reason behind these arrests the Prime Minister, Mr. Shams-ud-Din, said that he did not know about it and he would be able to say something after he consulted the District Magistrate. On one side the Relic agitation was on and on the other the State administration was in the doldrum. Mr. Vishwanathan was running the administration on his own and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad separately. This way the Prime Minister Mr. Shams-ud-Din remained in name only. The reality was that when Mr. Shams-ud-Din went to meet and discuss some matters with Mr. Vishwanathan, representative of the Government of India who was staying in the Guest House, he had to wait for 40 minutes in the drawing room before he could see him (Vishwanathan). Top police and civil officers especially those who belonged to the Central Departments would straight go to Mr. Vishwanathan for orders.

No newspaper could be published because of complete hartal including in printing presses in Srinagar. And suddenly on December 30, 1963 a rumour went afloat that the holy Relic had been found and the Kashmir police had arrested two Gujjars near Kangan who were on way to Pakistan to smuggle the holy Relic. I wanted to contact the DIG Police, Mr. Ghulam Qadir Ganderbali, in this connection but I was told that he used to spend most of his time in a special cell set up in Sherghari Police Station. So without getting into touch with him in his office I also came to know that Khawaja Abdul Rahim Bandey, one of the custodians at the Hazratbal Shrine and who would usually make people to have "Deedar" (glimpse) of the holy Relic, had also been taken in to custody by the Police for interrogation. In order to satisfy myself about the authenticity of the report of recovery of the holy Relic, I went to the

Sherghari Police Station where the DIG, Sheikh Ghulam Qadir Ganderbali, asked me. "If the holy Relic was found out, will not the people question its genuiness?" This question caused mental conflict in me and the DIG had also asked me about peoples' reaction to the story of "arrest of two Gujjars and recovery of the holy Relic from them at Kangan". I on the basis of the question made up my mind that the rumour had been spread by official circles to assess the public reaction. The DIG thereupon repeated thrice: "The holy Relic can be traced but we have fears if people refuse to treat it genuine, what will then happen"?

Next day the Bakshi secretly left for New Delhi by air and another rumour got round that the holy Relic was recovered from a boat. It was rumoured that a person had wrapped the Relic in a shawl and placed it on an empty boat near the Hazratbal Shrine and had himself escaped. This time I did not want to confirm the report because I was convinced that such rumours were being spread to know the public reaction and feeling. However, I went to the DIG, Sheikh Ghulam Qadir Ganderbali, in his office where he was holding talks with other police officers and before I was ushered in he had asked other officers to leave the room. I wanted to know from the DIG the reason behind the Bakshi's sudden trip to Delhi and the DIG gave me a big surprise by saying, "the holy Relic had been recovered and Bakshi Sahib had gone to Delhi to get the silver bottom of the Relic cover repaired and he will be back by tomorrow". This disclosure stunned me and I asked the DIG as to why the recovery of the holy Relic was not being announced to make it known among the people. He said, "We have some fears: unless we are convinced that nobody would challenge its genuiness we cannot make

any public disclosure". He advised me also not to disclose it to anybody.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad returned from New Delhi on January 2 and I went to his place to meet him. The Bakshi was in a session with number of persons including Moulvi Mohammad Shah, Mufti Rashid-ul-Din and others. So I could not meet him. A day earlier a Committee was properly constituted to carry out the relic agitation and people had been advised to assemble at Khanyar on January 2 to listen to an important announcement. Since Khanyar on congregation was a small one so only the demand for restoration of holy Relic, and no important announcement, was made. However, the formation of the Committee was announced and Moulvi Farooq was made the Chairman of this "Action Committee". This surprised many because in comparison to other leaders, who had joined the Committee, Moulvi Farooq was a young-boy. Next day (January 3) I went to meet the Bakshi again who revealed that the Action Committee had been formed after consultations with him. During the talks the Bakshi told me that Abdul Rahim Bandey was always his political enemy and it was totally wrong to say that Mr. Bandey had brought the holy Relic from the Shrine a day ahead of "my mother's death" and he had helped Bakshi's mother to have "Deedar" of the Relic just before her death. (The Bakshi's mother had passed away in the house at Miskeen Bagh where Bakshi's brother Mr. Abdul Majid used to live)¹.

1. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad said it when I put a question to him regarding the remour in which it was being said that before the death of his mother, the Bakshi had requested Khawaja Abdul Rahim Bandey to bring the holy Relic to Miskeen Bagh to enable the Bakshi's mother to have a "Deedar" and Mr. Bandey had obliged him by doing so.

On January 4, 1964 at 6-15 in the evening the Srinagar Radio Station dramatically announced that the holy Relic had been found and this brief broadcast stunned and surprised the people of Kashmir. The brief radio announcement was "the holy Relic was found in the Hazratbal Shrine and it was picked up and shown to competent and concerned authorities who certified its genuiness. Investigations are continuing". Though this announcement was being loudly and repeatedly made from the AIR, the people of Kashmir did not accept it and the agitation, mourning and hartal continued. The Union Home Secretary, Mr. Vishwanathan told newsmen in the Guest House on January 5, 1964 that the holy Relic had been recovered and the Central Intelligence Bureau continued its investigation in the incident and hoped that within next three days the details of the investigations would be known. Those newsmen who were invited to the Guest House did not include any person from the local press and correspondents, who represented the newspapers published from outside the State were all non-Muslims. Mr. Vishwanathan had also told newsmen that after completing the investigations the case would be referred to a court and the Relic would be restored again in the holy precincts of the Shrine. As the agitation was not called off the Government imposed section 144 on January 6, 1964 in all towns and the city and people were asked to resume their work as a decision to suppress the agitation with full force had been taken. At a public Rally organised by the Action Committee five demands were made. 1. The holy Relic be again kept in the Hazratbal Shrine and it should not be kept in the custody of the Government. 2. For identification of the holy Relic a Committee of public and Government representatives be set up. 3. Further investigation of the incident be undertaken by the

Central Intelligence Bureau. 4. The case relating to this incident be tried by a judge of a High Court from outside the State. 5. All the arrested be released.

While presenting these five demands the Action Committee appealed to the people to call off the hartal and desist from taking out processions without the permission of the Committee. But despite this appeal the situation remained full of discontent. On the evening of January 8, 1964 Mr. Vishwanathan said at a news conference, in which representatives of the local press were also invited, that the Government would use force to curb agitation and maintain law and order. When I drew his attention towards the demand of people for identification of the holy Relic he looked towards me and in a challenging tone said, "Whosoever demands the further identification of the relic was speaking the language of Pakistan. The Government will not allow this sort of activity." He could not reply any question relating to the recovery of the Relic and the agency involved in the theft. He only issued threats against continuation of the agitation. In reply to a question he repeated that no agitation or mourning processions would be tolerated. But he refused to say anything about the person who placed back the relic near the Shrine and when it would be given back to its custodians. He simply referred to a press release from the Union Ministry for Home affairs in which it was mentioned that those who had stolen the holy Relic had, out of fear, left it back, and escaped.

Three days later (January 11, 1964) Mr. Vishwanathan disclosed at a press conference that the holy Relic had been restored at its usual place last night and in this connection he announced a public holiday in the

State that day which was to be followed by illumination of all Government buildings that very evening. He disclosed that the holy Relic had been kept in a box whose keys were, for the time being, with the IGP Mr. L.D. Thakur. He said that orders had been issued to curb all demonstrations, agitations and dissatisfaction over the restoration of the holy Relic with full force. The role of Moulvi Farooq and Masoodi remained somewhat mysterious and suspicious and their public appeal for giving up the agitation did not bear any fruit and small processions and demonstrations continued. And before leaving for giving for New Delhi, where he would apprise the Union Government about the situation in Kashmir and seek its guidance, Mr. Vishwanathan called a press conference on January 14, 1964 wherein he said that complete arrangements had been made for maintaining law and order. "I do not want to enter into any discussion on the question of identification of the Relic. The holy Relic restored to the Shrine is real and there is no need to express doubts about it. I have kept some central officers here to tackle the situation and I may return again". He also said that there might be a public "Deedar" of the Relic on February 5, 1964 and this date was fixed by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, who was President of the Auqaf Committee. The public anger and displeasure continued. And on January 21, 1964 the Union Home Minister, Mr. G.L. Nanda, told a press conference in new Delhi that hearing of the court case against those who had stolen the holy Relic would begin within next two weeks and the Government of India was in touch with political leaders and Government officers over the internal situation in Kashmir. However, this time also the Union Home Minister did not say anything about "who stole the Relic? Who brought it back? If the Government

has arrested some people in this connection, who are they and what is their number?" Complete silence over these questions had led the people of Kashmir to believe that they were being deceived. They were helpless as the leaders of the Relic Movement too had adopted complete silence.

During the same period Pakistan raised again the Kashmir issue in the Security Council and while supporting the Muslim agitation in Kashmir demanded implementation of the UN resolution on Kashmir. This caused anxiety to Government of India. Since the agitation in Kashmir was on, Mr. Vishwanathan returned Srinagar on January 25, 1964 where he warned people against continuing the agitation. He accused "Pakistani agents" of inciting people in Kashmir. Although the agitation was called off, but the shops would close down at four O'clock as a mark of protest against non-fulfilment of peoples' demands. As the public resentment continued Mr. Vishwanathan imposed restriction on Moulvi Farooq and Maulana Masoodi. They were debarred to leave the municipal limits of Srinagar. As there was no improvement in the situation, Prime Minister Nehru was compelled to send Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, Union Minister without portfolio, to Srinagar. On reaching Srinagar on January 30, 1964, he started dialogue with political leaders and top Government officers and this included Moulvi Farooq, Maulana Masoodi, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Prime Minister Shams-ud-Din.

Two days after Mr. Shastri's arrival, Maulana Masoodi informed me that the Government planned to arrange public "Deedar" of the holy Relic, under heavy security arrangements, which would be against the

Islamic conventions and this plan was feared to result in bloodshed. That very evening I met Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad whom I told that "Deedar" of the holy Relic, without its proper identification, could prove dangerous and it might cause bloodshed. But the Bakshi was not prepared for any identification of the Relic and said, "this is not possible in any circumstances. If any attempt was made for its identification it would prove more dangerous than planned public "Deedar" You also should desist from advocating the cause of identification". I tried to convince the Bakshi about the need for identification and verification on the plea that without it future generations of muslims would have doubts, fears and contradictions over it but the Bakshi remained adamant and said, "the question of verification and identification of the relic was not feasible. It was so because those who will be entrusted with the task of verification will not accept its genuineness. And no Government is willing to own any danger on this account".

After some behind the scene activities on February 3, 1964, in a dramatic move, Maulana Masoodi, Moulvi Farooq, Sayed Mirak Shah of Shalimar and some other members of the Action Committee reached Hazratbal where Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri Prime Minister Shams-ud-Din, IGP, Mr. L.D. Thakur and other top officers were already present. These persons sat reverently in the precincts of the Shrine and one of the custodians, Khawaja Noor-ud-Din Bandey, brought a box in his hands. The moment he reached near the small gathering Maulana Masoodi said to him, "Noor Sahib we all are in a house of God at present and the holy Quran is in front of you. Whatever you say, you will say nothing but truth in the name of God".

Khawaja Noor-ud-Din Bandey replied, "I speak the truth and say that this is the Prophets' holy Relic." At the moment Syed Mirak Shah Kashani a religious leader said :

کیا شان احمدی کا چمن میں ظہور ہے
 ہر غل میں ہر شجر میں مکتوم کا نور ہے

But the holy Relic neither was shown to anybody, nor any person verified its genuiness at that moment.

After 40 minutes' function in the Hazratbal Shrine it was announced that the holy Relic was verified and identified and it would be shown to the public on February 5 and 6, 1964. People heard this announcement with an element of doubt, compulsion and fears in their minds. Their hearts would not reconcile to the announcement but despite this they remained silent. That very evening an announcement was made in New Delhi that the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, had appointed Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, External Affairs Minister who was upto then a Minister without portfolio.

On February 6, 1964 the holy Relic was being shown to the public in connection with the Urs-e-Charyar and on the other hand the Kashmir issue and theft of the holy Relic had become a matter of heated debate in the Security Council between the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, and the Indian Representative, Mr. M.C. Chagla. But neither anybody was told about the person who had stolen the holy Relic nor it was disclosed how the Relic was found in the Shrine. In the wake of growing suspicion over these missing links the Union Minister for Home Affairs, Mr. G.L. Nanda, informed the Parliament that

it would take one more week to complete the investigation relating to the theft of the holy Relic from the Hazratbal shrine and soon the case would be referred to a court. In spite of questions and supplementaries from the members of the House the Union Home Minister did not give any other detail of the incident and only said that those who had committed the mischief were in police custody but refused to divulge their names. While commenting on this statement Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad said that perhaps the Government of India was trying to gain political advantage out of it. He said it on the plea that Mr. Nanda had, in his statement, stated that he would not disclose the names of all accused because all of them had not been yet arrested. This statement had made the matter more complicated and suspicious.

When Government of India's attention was drawn towards growing restlessness and suspicion among the people of Kashmir over the missing links in the holy Relic theft incident, Mr. G.L. Nanda announced in the parliament on February 17, 1964 that three persons, namely Hazratbal Chief Custodian Khwaja Abdul Rahim Bandey, Abdul Rashid of Tral and Qadir Bhat, had been arrested in connection with the theft of holy Relic. Mr. Nanda also informed the House that Abdul Rashid had been arrested when he had come to place back the holy Relic in the Shrine and Qadir Bhat was usual visitor to Pakistan. But Mr. Nanda did not elaborate about the place to which Qadir Bhat belonged and why he was arrested.

Later on, I was informed by a concerned police officer that no person of the name of Qadir Bhat had been arrested in connection with the Relic Theft case. Though Abdul Rahim Bandey and Abdul Rashid, who

was Assistant Agricultural Officer, from Tral, were in the police custody. It is worth mentioning here that on January 3, 1964, the DIG during his conversation, had told me that the recovery of the Relic would be announced by the Chief Custodian Khwaja Abdul Rahim Bandey himself from the Srinagar Radio Station. Mr. Bandey was at that time in police custody whereas Abdul Rashid was taken into custody after the recovery of the holy Relic. Only after few months of the end of the holy Relic agitation Abdul Rashid was reinstated and later was promoted to the post of Agricultural Officer. Abdul Rahim Bandey was released on bail after an assurance was sought from him that he would not disclose to anybody anything about the theft and recovery of the holy Relic. Again on February 19, 1964, Mr. Nanda misled the House by saying that Qadir Bhat had escaped and crossed over to Pakistan. After this neither any investigation was carried out nor any trial was launched. Even the leaders of the Holy Relic Committee did not insist for the trial. Consequently no further action was taken in this regard.

Though the above mentioned events, regarding the theft and the restoration of the holy Relic made the entire affair dubious and suspicious. But when I contacted the Chief Custodian of the Hazratbal Shrine, Khwaja Abdul Rahim Bandey, who was on bail, more than once, and asked him to comment on the theft of the holy Relic and its recovery, he declined everytime. He said that the Government had involved him too in the case and he had been released on bail only when he assured the authorities that he will say nothing in public or privately regarding the whole episode. "I have been involved in the case, though I have not committed any crime", he added.

10

1965 WAR

Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, who had gone back to Delhi after completing his mission in Srinagar visited Jammu again, on Mr. Nehru's instructions, on February 19, to bring a change in the leadership in Jammu and Kashmir. In Jammu Mr. Shastri met State Assembly members, the Prime Minister, Mr. Shams-ud-Din, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Mr. G.M. Sadiq, Mr. D.P. Dhar virtually acted as Mr. Shastri's Chief Adviser in his task. Moulvi Farooq and Maulana Masoodi were also invited to Jammu for talks. During his talks with the Jammu and Kashmir Legislators, Mr. Shastri conveyed them a message on behalf of the Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, that the Centre wants Mr. G.M. Sadiq should be elected the leader of the legislature party in place of Mr. Shams-ud-Din. After the satisfactory results of his talks Mr. Shastri rushed back to New Delhi to inform the Prime Minister and then came back again to Jammu in the morning of February 28 and that very evening the State Legislature Party, in its meeting elected Mr. G.M. Sadiq as its leader in place of Mr. Shams-ud-Din and this way New Delhi snatched the strings of the Government from the hands of the Bakshi and handed them over to Mr. Sadiq. Mr. D.P. Dhar played an important role in this game and in the new cabinet Mr. Sadiq inducted Mr. D.P. Dhar, Sayed Mir Qasim and Mr. Traluchan Dutt. On the suggestion of Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, Mr. D.P. Dhar was allotted the portfolio of

Home, Sayed Mir Qasim got Revenue and Finance was given to Mr. Dutt.

Soon after this, Pakistan raised the Kashmir issue again in the Security Council but the Indian representative at the United Nations, Mr. Chakravarty sent a letter to the Chairman of the Security Council in which he conveyed that he will not participate in any deliberations on Kashmir in the Security Council. Despite this and after ignoring the opposition from the Soviet Union and Chakoslovakia the meeting of the Security Council was fixed and convened on March 17 to consider the issue.

Simultaneously in Kashmir rumours about possible release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his associates, who were under detention in connection with the conspiracy case, started getting afloat. To support the Pakistan's plea the Holy Relic Action Committee demanded that the Kashmir issue should be settled on the basis of UN resolutions. In the meeting the plebiscite Front, Political Conference, Jamat-i-Islami, Mirwaiz Party and other parties jointly adopted a resolution which demanded that people of Kashmir be given the right to decide their future. Meanwhile the Prime Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq and Mr. D.P. Dhar went to Delhi where they met Mr. Nehru. Mr. Dhar returned from New Delhi straight to Srinagar and met Maulana Masoodi and some Action Committee leaders including Moulvi Farooq. As Home Minister Mr. D.P. Dhar handled deftly some leaders of the Holy Relic Action Committee which resulted in disturbances in the Zadibal Public meeting on March 22, 1964. The supporters of Mirwaiz Party started disturbing the meeting right from the beginning and when Mr. Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra came to the mike the supporters of Moulvi, under the

command of Mr. Abdul Rahim Waza, indulged in hooliganism and disturbed the public meeting. The leaders lost control over the meeting and amidst disorder people dragged some leaders down the rostrum. Mr. D.P. Dhar appeared to be most happy over this incident and left for Jammu the next day to apprise Mr. Sadiq of the situation.

On one side members of the State Legislative Assembly and Members of Parliament were organising a signature campaign for the release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, this demand was being voiced by the people also, on the other side the leaders of the Holy Relic Action Committee were silent over this issue. Despite their mysterious silence and internal conspiracies, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, the Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister, dramatically announced at a Press Conference in Jammu, on March 31, 1964, that he had decided to withdraw the conspiracy case and release Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah unconditionally. This announcement initiated a new and historic period for Kashmir. The result of the holy Relic agitation was that the 17-year old mansions of curbs and restrictions on civil liberties were demolished. The people saw their demands fulfilled and all civil liberties were restored; curbs on freedom of press and speech were lifted. And in this pleasant atmosphere Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Sofi Mohammad Akbar and other political leaders were released on the morning of April 8, 1964. The 3-month old Holy Relic Action Committee was plagued with disunity and dissensions had reached the peak when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had to reach Srinagar on April 16, 1964. For full eight days a reception committee could not be formed because Moulvi Farooq and Mr. Ghulam Rasool Kochak were

claiming their right to become chairman of the Committee. A proposal to have two Chairmen of the Committee too could not be accepted. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah reached Srinagar on April 17 instead of April 16, 1964. And over five lakh people gave the Sheikh rousing reception.

After the release of the Sheikh, the Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, announced at the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary party, on April 22, 1964, that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had been invited for talks on Kashmir. According to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah he went to New Delhi on April 29, 1964 along with his lieutenant Mirza Afzal Beg where he had talks with Mr. Nehru. The talks were in progress when Pakistan President, General Ayub Khan, sent a communication to the Sheikh. The communication had requested Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah not to take any step without consulting Pakistan and this connection General Ayub Khan had invited him to Pakistan also. Mr. Nehru announced in the Lok Sabha on May 8, 1964 that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was visiting Pakistan to have talks on Kashmir. The Sheikh returned to Srinagar on May 12, 1964. At Srinagar airport he told newsmen that basis for solving the Kashmir question were laid down during his talks in New Delhi. After a week's stay in Srinagar Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to Rawalpindi on May 24, 1964. He was accompanied by Mirza Afzal Beg and Maulana Masoodi. On May 25, 1964 he started his talks with the Pakistan President, General Ayub Khan, and after the first session Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah disclosed that President Ayub Khan had agreed to visit New Delhi for talks on Kashmir. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had decided to visit Azad Kashmir but when he reached Muzaffarabad,

he had to give up the mission as Mr. Nehru passed away on May 27, 1964. The Sheikh returned to Delhi that very day. Mr. Nehru was succeeded by Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri but Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah felt dismayed after he had talks with Mr. Shastri on Kashmir. He returned to Srinagar on June 11, 1964 and at his residence at Saura he told me "attempts of solving the Kashmir question have received a serious setback by Mr. Nehru's death and the new leadership was not in a position to continue these efforts." After dissensions surfaced the politics of Kashmir on June 20, 1964 Moulvi Farooq announced setting up of a separate political party with "Awami Action Committee" as its nomenclature. The holy Relic Action Committee leaders were surprised over it and an emergency meeting of the Committee was held at Mujahid Manzil where Moulvi Farooq was accused of causing dissensions among Muslims and on this ground he was removed from the Presidentship of the Committee. He was no longer kept as a member of the Committee either. Maulana Mohammad Abbas Ansari was appointed President of the holy Relic Action Committee and this way the traditional "Sher Bakra" rivalry between supporters of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mirwaiz family became alive once again. And clashes started taking place between the two rival groups in which Mr. D.P. Dhar and former Prime Minister, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, and his supporters sided with Moulvi Farooq. Mr. Dhar as Home Minister had developed influence in the Mirwaiz camp.

Pakistan took a serious note of this division and sent Aga Shauqat Ali a former General Secretary of Muslim Conference to Srinagar on the pretext of meeting his relatives. In Srinagar he met plebiscite Front

and Awami Action Committee leaders and conveyed to them President Ayub Khan's message which had expressed displeasure over the political situation in Kashmir. After his meeting with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah at Saura, Aga Shauqat Ali told me that he had informed the Sheikh about the outcome of his meeting with Moulvi Farooq. He also told me "I carried a message from President Ayub Khan for Moulvi Farooq in which the President had suggested to the Moulvi to remain united with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and strengthen his hands. Moulvi Farooq has assured me that he will act upon the advice." Just a week there ensued a sort of amity between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Moulvi Farooq though the latter did not dissolve the Awami Action Committee.

When the new leadership in Delhi secured some confidence, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to New Delhi where he met the Prime Minister, Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh, and other leaders to find out whether India was willing to continue the efforts to solve the Kashmir issue. But Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was highly dismayed to find that no leader was prepared to invite danger by touching the subject after the death of Mr. Nehru. Out of disgust Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah decided to tour some foreign countries and announced that he would go on a Haj pilgrimage. He returned to Srinagar and by that time there did not appear to be any open confrontation between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Centre or between him and the State Government. But the situation took a turn when the Sheikh announced launching of social boycott movement at a congregation at Hazratbal on January 15, 1965. The aim of the movement was to observe

social boycott against those who opposed people's right of self-determination. With the beginning of this movement supporters of Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, and his Congress Party clashed with supporters of the Plebiscite Front and it developed an atmosphere of confrontation. The movement was not confined to Srinagar city alone, it spread to all other towns and villages of the Valley. If a Congressman would die people would not join the funeral procession. People even gave up entering into relationship with Congressman and number of Congressmen complained that even the barbers would not shave them. As New Delhi took serious notice of the social boycott movement, it directed the State Government to take steps against this. Accordingly number of people were detained under Defence of India Rules. In the meantime Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, accompanied by his wife and Mirza Afzal Beg, left for Haj pilgrimage on February 5, 1965. Sofi Mohammad Akbar was appointed acting President of the Plebiscite Front but in reality Maulana Masoodi and Moulvi Farooq were made responsible for the movement activities. The Sheikh told a public rally at Jama Majid Srinagar that the people should have their contact with Moulvi Farooq and Maulana Masoodi. After Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's departure the situation slightly changed and on March 7, 1965, when the Sheikh was in London, about 2,000 workers and leaders of the Plebiscite Front were arrested. After the arrest of Sofi Mohammad Akbar, Munshi Mohammad Ishaq replaced him as acting President of the Front.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to Algeria and Egypt besides his trip to England. From Cairo he went to Algeria where Algerian President, Mr. Ahmed Ben Bella, invited him to a dinner which he had hosted in

honour of the visiting Chinese Premier, Chou-En-Lai and during the dinner Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the Chinese Prime Minister exchanged views on Kashmir. The Sheikh had already met President Nasir of Egypt, the Vice-President, Hussain Shafai, Speaker of Egyptian Parliament Anawar Sadat, and Chief Editor of "Al-Ahram", Hasnain Heikel, in Cairo.

New Delhi took very serious notice of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's meeting with Chinese Premier and in the Parliament the Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, was asked to explain why Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was given the opportunity to visit foreign countries to plan with the enemies of India. This matter resulted in pandemonium in New Delhi.

From Algeria Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to the Mecca for the Haj where he met King Faissel with whom he discussed the Kashmir question. He met the King twice. New Delhi, through her ambassador in Saudi Arabia, sent a warning to the Sheikh that if he did not return immediately, his passport would be cancelled and the Indian ambassador turned down the request of the Sheikh and his associate for extension of their stay in Saudi Arabia. When Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, his wife and Mirza Afzal Beg returned to India, they were not allowed to leave the Palam airport. They were served with detention warrant. The Sheikh and the Beg were taken to Ottacumund, a small hill station in the South, where they were kept under detention. Begum Abdullah stayed in Delhi. The step of the Government resulted, as has been usual, in big agitation in Kashmir where it was suppressed with the help of lathis and bullets. Large number of people were imprisoned and under Defence of India Rules

restrictions were placed on 10 newspapers which included the official organs of the Plebiscite Front. When on May 9, 1965, in the afternoon a large crowd assembled in the compound of Jama Masjid to register their protest against externment of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other leaders, the police entered the mosque premises and charged people with lathis to disperse them. In this lathi charge teeth of Maulana Masoodi were knocked out and in an unconscious state he was admitted to the Nursing Home for treatment. After this the leadership of the movement fell in his hands and he brought the Plebiscite Front, Political Conference and the Awami Action Committee on one platform. He launched a civil disobedience movement on June 6, 1965 to press upon the Government to release Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. On this day the first batch led by Khwaja Ghulam Ahmed Mir, dressed in white, courted arrest in Lal Chowk. Thereafter, thousands of people enrolled their names for courting arrest. Large number of people were seen almost every-day at Lal Chowk to witness courting arrest in a peaceful manner.

After some time Mirza Afzal Beg, on grounds of health, was brought to Srinagar from Ottacumund where he was kept under detention in a bungalow at Nishat. In the first week of August a rumour went round that Pakistani armed personnel had entered into Kashmir. The Government had learnt of it through top sources and consultations between Srinagar and New Delhi were in progress. The Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, told me on the morning of August 8, 1965 that he had already come to know of the presence of Pakistani armed personnel. He had learnt about it through a special source but he did not divulge the source. There was

turmoil and panic in Srinagar and on August 9, 1965 hartal was observed in the city and other towns under the instructions of the leaders of the movement. A day early a decision was taken to change the venue of the public meeting from Khanyar to Mujahid Manzil. And while addressing the public Maulana Masoodi said, "people should maintain law and order at every cost. They should not depend on rumours and whatever was happening before them, they should witness that silently. The situation was delicate and any mistake on your part will be the cause of your trouble. We are peace loving people and wish to solve our problems through peaceful and constitutional procedures". The Maulana's speech had no sound impact on the people who in turn became victims of panic and terror. The night of August 10, 1965 saw sporadic firing and on August 11 the Border Security Forces and the Pakistani armed personnel about whom it was said that sizable number of them belonged to Azad Kashmir, exchanged fire at Bemina which aggravated panic in the city. Security guards were posted outside the Civil Secretariat and the residences of Congress leaders and top civil officers. The Central Reserve Police personnel were posted at the airport, outside the Radio Station and in the police control room. The leaders of social boycott movement hid themselves in their houses.

These events were followed by a broadcast from a secret Radio Station "Sadai Kashmir" which said that an armed rebellion had broken out in Kashmir. On one side the announcement regarding the revolt continued and on the other side mini-wars between the Indian security forces and the Pakistani armed personnel continued at Srinagar, Batamaloo, Beerwah, Ganderbal, Gulmarg, Yusmarg and other places in the Valley. On

the morning of August 14, 1965 a decision was taken, in a meeting, held between top Army commanders and the Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, and his associates, that since Batamaloo area was virtually under the control of armed Pakistanis, the area should be set on fire. Accordingly the entire area of Batamaloo was set on fire. Along with firing and skirmishes there was a political explosion when Munshi Mohammad Ishaq announced his resignation from the Plebiscite Front in a dramatic manner. I tried to contact Munshi Mohammad Ishaq immediately to know the real situation but till August 18 he was not available. The Munshi was an important leader of the freedom struggle and a man of strong determination. He had some trust in me and I was able to meet him at his residence at Nawpora on the evening of August 18. After a brief conversation over the situation in the Valley I straightway asked the Munshi as to why he had announced his resignation from the Presidentship of the Plebiscite Front. This question turned his face red with anger and in a fit of anxiety he said, "best opportunity of our freedom has been lost. Nobody listened to my advice and everybody for the sake of individual security, sabotaged the plan".

I wanted to know the details of the plan and he said, "it had been decided that we will not remain unconcerned during this moment. Pakistanis had talked with us and I had personally agreed with their plan. Their plan was to undertake a sudden operation of occupying Srinagar airport, radio station, Sadar Police Station and other police stations at Maharaj Ganj and Khanyar. We had been entrusted with the responsibility of seeking public support for this action so that there could be no other alternative for India except to

agree on having an honourable settlement of the Kashmir issue. And the message of armed revolution which was being broadcast from 'Sadai Kashmir' would take a real shape and would be implemented. But we, "out of selfishness and temerity, did not co-operate".

"Was it ever possible?" I asked him. To this question Munshi Mohammad Ishaq said: "Those people had made complete arrangements for this. For capturing the airport entire team of people had reached Badgam and for similar work sizeable number of people along with arms had been brought to the city." At this moment tears came to his eyes and the room was swept by icy silence. Before taking leave of the Munshi I enquired from him whether he had made a final and firm decision to resign from the Presidentship of the Front. He replied, "in case I feel that my resignation will cause any inconvenience to the public, I will not hesitate to withdraw it".

According to one estimate about 10,000 armed personnel had crossed into the Valley via different passes and paths from Azad Kashmir between last week of July and first week of August. These personnel had adequate arms and ammunition. The majority of the armed personnel belonged to "Azad Kashmir" army and were originally citizens of Jammu and Kashmir State. They were equipped with automatic rifles, sten-guns, small machine guns and other modern types of fire arms and weapons. During this time various central leaders including Union Home Minister, Mr. Gulzari Lal Nanda, the Defence Minister, Mr. Y.B. Chavan, the then Union Minister for Information, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and the President of India, Dr. S.

Radhakrishnan, came to Kashmir, one after another, to supervise war arrangements against the armed personnel. During this entire period the Army Chief remained in Kashmir but suddenly he left for New Delhi on September 1 by an army plane.

A day later on the afternoon of September 2, 1965 an official spokesman in New Delhi disclosed that one brigade of Pakistani Army along-with weapons and tanks was advancing towards Chamb in Jammu. An hour after this disclosure the Defence Minister announced in the meeting of the consultative committee of M.Ps. attached to his Ministry that Pakistan had launched a heavy attack in Chamb area and had advanced by five miles. He also informed the Committee that the Indian Air Force had been ordered to go in action and carry out air raids and bombing of the advancing Pakistani troops. It was on September 3, 1965 that massive air attacks and counter attacks took place in Chamb Sector when the Pakistan infantry was marching towards Akhnoor, in which Pakistan pressed into service Sabre and F-104 fighters which were supplied by USA. There were several dog fights in Chamb area. On the other side Pakistan also launched an ground attack in Tithwal and Uri Sector in Kashmir. Between September 3 to September 4, 1965 the war remained confined to Jammu and Kashmir borders but on September 5, 1965 the Indian troops entered the Pakistani territory from Lahore Sector.

As there was flare-up the President of Pakistan, General Mohammad Ayub Khan, announced in an unscheduled broadcast to his nation, "we are at war with India and India has launched a massive attack on Pakistan from Lahore". General Ayub Khan had also

disclosed in his Radio broadcast that the Indian bombers had bombed several civil and military installations in Pakistan. Next day the Indian troops entered into Pakistan's territory from Rajasthan border through Barmer area. The breaking out of war on big scale between the two sides brought mixed reaction in the whole world and the United Nations. And on September 9, 1965 it was announced that the Indian troops had also crossed the international border in Sialkot sector to enter Pakistani territory. The situation in Jammu was different : the Pakistani troops had advanced by 18 miles despite the Indian air attacks and heavy interception. The whole of Chhamb area was under their control and the Pakistani troops were marching speedily towards Akhnoor.

The onward march of the Indian troops in Pakistani territory gave rise to protest and concern in the Arab and Muslim countries and in Indonesia a large crowd, comprising mostly students, attacked the Indian Embassy and demonstrated in support of Pakistan. The Prime Minister of Iran rushed to Ankara where he had talks with the Turkish Prime Minister on the situation created out of the Indo-Pak War. A spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry in Tehran announced that "Iran would side with Pakistan in the current war and provide all possible assistance to her."

The UN Secretary General, U Thant immediately reached Rawalpindi from New York and from there came to New Delhi. America and Britain remained totally impartial in this war while the Soviet Union was helping India in all ways. The UN Secretary General, after his talks in Pakistan, made a proposal which called for a ceasefire and posting of the UN troops in the

disputed State of Kashmir. New Delhi expressed its willingness for a ceasefire but it rejected the proposal of sending the UN troops in the State. About U Thant's ceasefire proposal Pakistan put forth 3-point plan in which it was mentioned that prior to the ceasefire it should be accepted that soon after the cessation of war Indian and Pakistani troops in Jammu and Kashmir would be replaced by the UN troops and plebiscite will be held within three months after the troops of both the countries are vacated from Kashmir.

U Thant, after his talks in Rawalpindi and New Delhi, returned to New York on September 16, 1965 where he suggested convening of an emergency session of the Security Council for discussing the Indo-Pak war and other allied matters. He also made a proposal to the Security Council to order the two countries to stop war. And as per his proposal the Security Council held its nocturnal session on September 19, 1965 in which U Thant put up his report which was based on his talks with the Government of India and Pakistan. U Thant also told the Council to ask both the countries to restore August 5, 1965 position soon after the ceasefire. Some members of the Council supported the proposal that for settlement of the Kashmir dispute both India and Pakistan should withdraw their armies from Kashmir and replace them by the UN troops. However, the Indian representative, Mr. M.C. Chagla, refused to accept this proposal. In the meantime in Peking an official announcement was issued which said that if India did not stop the war against Pakistan, it would launch an attack on India. On the other side the Security Council adopted a resolution which called upon India and Pakistan to order ceasefire on September 20, 1965. The resolution, which was supported by 10 out of 11 members, said

that ceasefire be ordered on the afternoon of September 22, 1965 and after that August 5, 1965 position be restored. Later the two countries should solve the Kashmir issue through mutual negotiations. China had protested against the resolution and had rejected it but both India and Pakistan accepted the resolution and ordered their armed troops to stop firing from the morning of September 23, 1965. But even after the ceasefire there was no improvement in the situation for which the Security Council expressed its concern. U Thant continued his efforts for restoration of August 5, 1965 position and for settlement of the Kashmir dispute and in this connection he kept on having consultations not only with the Indian and Pakistani representatives but those belonging to the United States, United Kingdom and Soviet Union.

11

TASHKENT DECLARATION ON KASHMIR

Turmoli, restlessness and eagerness continued in Kashmir. Seeing people's anger and anxiety leaders like Maulana Masoodi and Moulvi Farooq and others came out again and started an attempt of befooling the people by their circuitous talks and ambiguous speeches. Along this the process of demonstrations started and a big crowd of students embarked on a programme of agitation. The State Government used armed police to curb the agitation and at number of places the Central Reserve Police opened fire on "pro-Pakistani demonstrations". When on October 5, 1965 a large crowd of students assembled in Bud Shah Chowk area to defy the curfew orders, the Central Reserve Police opened fire, when tear gassing failed to achieve the desired result, in which three youngmen were killed and several others wounded. Use of severe force resulted in increase in anger and despair among people. The Central Reserve police force was posted in the entire Valley when in the night between October 9 and 10, 1965 all leaders of the movement including Munshi Mohammad Ishaq of the Plebiscite Front and Moulvi Farooq were detained under the DIR. This brought forth bigger public enthusiasm and heavier dose of repression. In the wake of rising public anger the State Government placed under deten-

tion Maulana Masoodi and other 26 leaders including Khwaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra and other leading student leaders.

The session of the Security Council continued to consider the grave situation in the sub-continent. In its session of October 20, 1965, which infact had been convened to make some settlement between the two countries, Mr. Swaran Singh External Affairs Minister, and Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, Minister for Foreign Affairs, put forth India's and Pakistan's stand respectively. When Mr. Bhutto referred to certain events in relation to the Kashmir situation, Mr. Swaran Singh protested and the sitting of the Council was adjourned for one hour. When the deliberations resumed the Jordan representative raised objections against the way the Council was restricting Mr. Bhutto from making a statement. The President of the Council allowed Mr. Bhutto to make the statement in which he again referred to agitation, demonstrations and the activities of the armed police in Kashmir. The moment he started elaborating these points Mr. Swaran Singh walked out in protest against Mr. Bhutto's statement.

The Security Council again failed and the situation in the sub-continent remain unchanged. This prompted America, Britain and Russia to take up the matter on their own and find some solution to the problem. These countries separately tried to bring out some settlement between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. These attempts remained confined to the diplomatic level and in the meantime the Russian Prime Minister, Mr. Kosygin, in his separate communications to the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, and the President of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan offered Russia's good offices for negotiating between the two

countries on the Kashmir issue. In connection with this offer the Indian Finance Minister, Mr. T.T. Krishnamachari, went to Moscow on November 14, 1965 and during his four day stay, held talks with the Russian leaders. On his return on November 19, 1965 Mr. Krishnamachari told the newsmen at New Delhi, airport that the Russian leaders were desirous to arrange a meeting between Mr. Shastri and Mr. Ayub Khan at Tashkent. A few days later, on November 23, 1965, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Minister, left for Moscow to have talks with the Russian leaders. And one week after these talks the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, announced on Nov. 28, 1965 that he was prepared to go to Tashkent for talks with President Ayub Khan. The Russian efforts brought about improvement in contact between Moscow and New Delhi and Rawalpindi and such efforts were intensified on the diplomatic level. But on the other side China appeared to have hardened her attitude with the result there was increase in movement of Chinese troops on the Northern borders of India.

The efforts of the Soviet Union started showing some results and the President, General Ayub Khan, too agreed to go to Tashkent for talks with Mr. Shastri. The Indian Foreign Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh surprisely paid a four day visit to Moscow on December 24, 1965 in order to know whether there was any change in the Soviet policy on Kashmir. On his return he told newsmen at New Delhi airport that he had talks in Moscow over the summit conference between India and Pakistan and even the dates had been fixed for this meeting.

A week after the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Shastri, left for Tashkent on January 3, 1966 along with

a high level delegation. President Ayub Khan too reached Tashkent via Kabul with a high level delegation. Possibly no side wanted any delay and next day, January 4, the first common session of the Russian, the Indian and the Pakistani leaders were held at Tashkent. The session was presided over by the Russian Premier Mr. Kosygan and here besides him Mr. Shastri and Mr. Ayub Khan delivered speeches. Tashkent talks continued for six days and the entire discussion centred round Kashmir. The divergent stand taken on Kashmir by the two sides appeared to be coming in the way of a successful Tashkent meet but the Soviet Union dextrously made the two sides agree to come to an agreement which is known by Tashkent Declaration. This declaration was based on nine points which besides other things had included Indo-Pak agreement on settling the Kashmir issue through peaceful negotiations. The two sides had also agreed to exchange war prisoners and restore August 5, 1965 position on the borders by withdrawing their armies wherever they had advanced. A few hours after signing the Declaration, Indian Prime Minister Shastri died of heart attack in bedroom in his villa at Tashkent. Still process of implementation took place under the supervision of Mrs. Indira Gandhi who had taken over as Prime Minister of India after Mr. Shastri's death. The result was that August 5, 1965 position was restored but beyond that the Tashkent Declaration remained only a dumb document. After it India refused to have talks on Kashmir though diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored. Russia made further attempts to bring the two sides together for discussing the Kashmir issue but it did not meet any success. It also failed in its attempt to act as a mediator.

During this period the nomenclature of Sadar-i-Riyasat was abolished in Jammu and Kashmir through an amendment in the State constitution and it was replaced by Governor. Prime Minister's nomenclature too was abolished and replaced by Chief Minister and the then Prime Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq agreed on all this because he did not want New Delhi to have the feeling that he was not loyal to India. In reality the move to change the nomenclature of these posts had been put forward by the former Prime Minister, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, in the Legislative Assembly just a few weeks before relinquishing his office. After the changing of the nomenclature of the Sadar-i-Riyasat, Dr. Karan Singh, son of Maharaja Hari Singh, was left with no interest for remaining as Governor of the State. He ultimately resigned and New Delhi sent a senior Civil Officer, Mr. Bhagwan Sahay, to succeed him as Governor.

After about one and a half years of the Tashkent Declaration the Government of India promulgated an ordinance on June 18, 1966 which could treat the Plebiscite Front and other organisations, which were favouring separatism as illegal. Within the State the rift in the ruling Congress Party, headed by Mr. G.M. Sadiq, widened and the major reason for it was that New Delhi reposed its complete trust in Mr. D.P. Dhar as compared to other State leaders. Not only this, the centre would consult usually Mr. Dhar on all vital matters. Though Mr. Sadiq had deprived Mr. Dhar of the Home portfolio, he would still get the information about various important matters, even as Chief Minister, from Mr. Dhar. Major part of the State administration too would remain close to Mr. Dhar because this powerful lobby believed that the real power flowed from

New Delhi and it was prudent to prefer Mr. Dhar to anybody else he was New Delhi's trusted man. Mr. Dhar had made a special niche in the ruling Congress Party and this group included the party President Sayed Mir Qasim, Ghulam Rasool Kar, Mufti Mohammad Sayed and others. And these leaders too had developed contacts with New Delhi through Mr. Dhar. As the dissensions in the ruling party further deepened Sayed Mir Qasim was being put up to counter Mr. Sadiq in the same way Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad had been put up against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mr. Sadiq himself against the Bakshi.

Since a commission of enquiry had been instituted against irregularities committed by the Bakshi, he appeared to be disenchanted with New Delhi. Despite this he decided to contest Assembly elections in Feb. 1967 though he fully knew that it was not possible for an opposition party to get elected because of the "practices" which had been adopted during elections after 1947. A wing of the Plebiscite Front too participated in the 1967 elections but the Front Leadership rejected their thinking right in the beginning and announced that it would boycott elections because most of its leaders were in jail and the elections were not going to be free and fair. It made it clear that it would stick to boycotting the elections. In the elections the ruling Congress managed to see 23 of the 42 seats in the Valley go to its candidates without contest. This became possible when the concerned returning officers rejected the nomination forms of all the opposition candidates for these 23 constituencies in order to seek favour from the Government. In all 185 opposition candidates had filed their nomination papers for 42 seats and out of this, nomination papers of 160 candidates were rejected without

any valid reason. As usual the ruling Congress secured absolute majority in the elections and Mr. G.M. Sadiq returned to power again. After the formation of the New Government the ruling party witnessed further bigger differences.

HINDU ACTION COMMITTEE AGITATION

In the first week of August 1967 an incident came to focus where a Kashmiri pandit girl, Parmeshwari Handoo, an employee of Srinagar Departmental Store, married a muslim of her choice named Ghulam Rasool Kanth. Accompanying him, the girl went to the Dar-ul-Futwa of Mufti-e-Azam, Kashmir and embraced Islam. Some Kashmiri Pandits instigated her mother, Mrs. Dhanvati, to lodge a complaint with the Inspector General of Police, Mr. D.N. Koul. Mr. Kaul directed the concerned Police Station to register the case and investigate. The Police Station concerned after filing the case, arrested Ghulam Rasool Kanth along with his lawful wife and locked them up in Khanyar Police Station where the mother and relatives of the girl as also some prominent pandits met here and persuaded her to come back to the Hindu fold. They however, failed in their moves and the girl stuck firmly to her stand. This highhandedness was resented to by a section of muslims. In the meantime, some friendly lawyers advised Mrs. Dhanvati to move the Court. She filed a petition in the Additional District Magistrate's Court at Srinagar pleading that her daughter had no right to enter into a wed-lock on her own as she was a minor. It was prayed that the girl be freed from the police lock-up and given in the custody of her mother.

Many a prominent Kashmiri pandit lawyers pleaded on behalf of Mrs. Dhanvati. On the other hand, Kashmiri pandits formed a Hindu Action Committee that spearheaded an agitation. When the matter was raised in the State Assembly which was then in session at Srinagar, the Government made it plain that the matter was subjudice and, as such, the judgment was to be awaited. The Chief Minister, G.M. Sadiq who also headed the Home Department, revealed in the Assembly that a plot to create communal riots in Kashmir was unearthed. He said that many a leaders from the ruling Congress Party itself, professing faith in national unity and secularism, were a party to this plot. The Chief Minister also revealed the seizure of certain documents, diaries and a large quantity of ammunition. This disclosure created sensation in Kashmir.

Kashmir Pandit Agitation was gaining momentum and law and order became a problem for the Government. Mrs. Dhanvati was forced to withdraw the case by the Hindu Action Committee as it wanted a political solution of the issue. New Delhi seemed unusually concerned about the agitation and, as such, some top government officials including the Home Secretary were deputed to Srinagar. A team of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) stalwarts, comprising among others Prof. Balraj Madhok, also reached Srinagar. Lending fuel to the fire, they further escalated the situation. During his three day stay, the Home Secretary, Mr. L.P. Singh, had discussions with the State authorities and Hindu Action Committee members and appraised the Central Government of his assessment of the situation. Mr. Singh's report, endorsing the agitation, apportioned onus on the Sadiq Government.

Significantly, until then the situation, though tense, had not provoked any communal incident. But gathering the impression that the Centre was out to pressurize the State Government for operating against the interests of muslims, a counter agitation, marked by protest demonstrations, strikes and bandhs, was launched. The Hindu Action Committee bigwigs went on whipping up the religious feelings, thereby disturbing the age-old communal harmony. Day in and day out, Shetal Nath, in the heart of Srinagar, would witness public rallies where instead of accusing an individual who had married a hindu girl, the entire muslim community was attacked by provocative speeches. The government seemed helpless and the law and order deteriorated in the city. Ignoring the imposition of Sec. 144, the Hindu Action Committee continued holding rallies and demonstrations in which Kashmiri muslims and the Sadiq Government was thrown mud at. The muslims and the Chief Minister himself, exercised great restraint. Meanwhile, Mr. D.P. Dhar, dissenting from Chief Minister's policies resigned but later withdrew under the pressure of his friends.

Situation in Srinagar was worsening and on the morning of 25th August violent demonstrations started at Jammu in support of the Hindu Action Committee's demands. The State Chief Secretary, Mr. P.K. Dhawey, himself admitted that three muslim owned hotels were looted and their furniture set on fire. Some shops and a printing press belonging to muslims were also stoned and ransacked. The situation was so tense that army had to be called. To control situation in Srinagara, a 15 hour curfew was clamped initially which was extended by 60 hours. Hindu employees had already started boycott attending the offices. Curfew

imposition was accompanied by press censorship. Armed contingents of Central Reserve Police were deployed in place of Kashmir Police. The CRP men committed excesses on muslims. Curfew passes issued by the District Magistrate to such of the government employees as were responsible for the running of essential services proved of no use because the CRP men demanding identity of the pass holder would not only beat him up but also snatch his pass once he was found to be a muslim. In the afternoon of 27th August, a funeral procession was carried out from Habba Kadal. The deceased, an old man, was said to have succumbed to injuries inflicted during police lathi charge on a violent mob. At Karan Nagar five muslim owned shops were set on fire and surrounding houses stoned. This worsened the situation in the city all the more. All the courts and government offices were closed. This alarmed the Centre and the Home Minister, Mr. Y.B. Chavan, himself came to Srinagar on 2 September 1967 to make an assessment of and intervene in the situation. He exchanged views on the issue with the Chief Minister, other State officials and the Hindu Action Committee leaders. The Home Minister proposed that the girl be kept in the custody of her mother pending judicial verdict. Earlier, Mr. D.P. Dhar, too, had mooted this proposal but Mr. Sadiq did not approve of it. Closetted in a meeting, he said to the Home Minister, "To me law is supreme. I would prefer resign than allow interference in it. A major girl from a particular religion marrying an adult boy from a different faith is not objectionable in the eyes of law. So far as the relevant municipal, school and service records go, the girl is a major and I am not prepared to accept her as a minor". On hearing this, Mr. D.P. Dhar walked out of the meeting. Mr. Chavan, however, assuring sym-

pathetic consideration on their demands, made the Hindu Action Committee leaders suspend their agitation till the Court Verdict.

These month-long developments dealt a severe blow to the political ideas of G.M. Sadiq. Every hindu branded him a staunch communalist. Not only the actions of D.P. Dhar and hindu workers of the Congress Party but also the repeated and uncalled for intervention by the Centre as also the attitude of the Indian Press made Mr. Sadiq strongly feel as he himself puts it, "Be in the saddles of power or outside, a muslim is always oppressed in this Country. If thousands of muslims are rounded up under the Defence of India Rules and scores of them sent to gallows, there is nobody to raise a finger against this injustice. But if a muslim Chief Minister simply displeases a hindu citizen, the entire hindu population of the Indian Republic turns against him". Circumstances affected a great change in the thinking of Mr. Sadiq and he released all hitherto detained workers of the Plebiscite Front, political Conference and Awami Action Committee. The Hindu Action Committee satyagrahis were also released unconditionally. As later developments, the Departmental Store's girl, Parmeshwari Handoo, as Parveen Akhtar, became life partner of Ghulam Rasool Kanth. The Centre appointed an Inquiry Commission under the headship of a retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Mr. Justice Gajendar Gadkar, that was to go through the complaints of the Hindu Action Committee in regard to political and employment imbalances and make its recommendations. Mr. Shankar Prasad and Badar-ud-Din Tayabji were the other two members of the Commission. After listening to different sections of people at Srinagar and Jammu, the Commission sub-

mitted its recommendations.

The turn that situation took not only disheartened the muslims in the ruling Congress Party but also caused severe unrest among Kashmiri muslim youths. As a result of muslim students of various colleges and youngmen organised themselves and started a renewed movement for self-determination. The Government reacted sternly to suppress this struggle. On 3 October the Central Reserve Police opened fire on a large student gathering at Budshah Chowk and Lal Chowk which resulted in instantaneous death of a young student, Mohammad Anwar Laharwal of Didi Kadal, and Bashir Ahmed Mir of Qazi Masjid, several others sustained bullet injuries. This deteriorated the situation and curfew was reimposed in the city. On 9 October, when the situation had almost returned to normal, the Central Reserve Police men started unprovoking and indiscriminate firing on the passers-by near Srinagar Sports Stadium. This police firing resulted in various deaths and still many were wounded. The dead included an Assistant Engineer from Doab-Gah named Ghulam Mohammad Khachoo, who had come to city for some private business. These developments changed public protest into an agitation. The Chief Minister, Mr. Sadiq, himself was so disgusted that he demanded eviction of the Central Reserve Police from Kashmir and deployed local police to guard law and order. The Central Reserve Police, though not withdrawn, was called from different places and stationed in the barracks so that it could be used to suppress the people as and when the need may arise.

THE KASHMIR PEOPLE'S CONVENTION

Since the Congress had the satisfaction and confidence of having come to power for another five years, it started the process of releasing Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg and other leaders of the Plebiscite Front and accordingly Mr. Beg was set free on July 6, 1967. This was followed by releasing other leaders one by one. And during this phase Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was first taken from Ottacamund to Kodaikanal and then from there to Bungalow No. 3 at Kotla Lane in New Delhi. In New Delhi the suggestion for his release was being considered and some members of Parliament too had demanded it. In the meantime the State Government released Maulana Masoodi and Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra on December 13, 1967 and Moulvi Farooq on December 20, 1967. These leaders had been arrested during October 1965 student agitation. New Delhi relaxed some restrictions on Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and he was allowed to meet people and move within the Delhi area.

During this period it was announced that the Russian Prime Minister, Mr. Kosygin, was visiting New Delhi and some newspapers published from Delhi, published an item which said that there was a possibility of a meeting between the Russian Premier and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Ultimately the Sheikh was

released on January 2, 1968 (it was Idd that day) and all restrictions were revoked. After his release he told a press conference in New Delhi that he would again try for solving the Kashmir problem. In this connection he had a long meeting with Mrs. Indira Gandhi and he also indicated that he had received an invitation from President Ayub Khan for visiting Pakistan. The Sheikh stated that he still stood by his stand that there could be no peace in the sub-continent without settlement of the Kashmir issue and this could be solved by an agreement between India, Pakistan and the People of Kashmir. The Sheikh attended a function which was held in connection with second anniversary of the Tashkent Declaration though it remained only on paper. The Sheikh also sent a communication and a bouquet to the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi through his son-in-law, Mr. G.M. Shah. After a few days the Russian Ambassador came to see the Sheikh and the two had a long meeting. Mirza Afzal Beg joined the talks for some time. In the meeting it was suggested that the Sheikh would meet the Russian Premier, Mr. Kosygin, who was scheduled to arrive in New Delhi shortly. If it was not possible for the Sheikh to meet Mr. Kosygin in New Delhi he would then visit Moscow to take up the thread where it had been left in his meeting with the Russian Ambassador. In this connection the Sheikh had sent a communication to the Russian Premier through the Soviet Ambassador. In the communication the Sheikh had expressed his desire to meet Mr. Kosygin and requested Mrs. Indira Gandhi for permitting him to visit Moscow. This development was followed by a communication from President Ayub Khan to the Sheikh in which a request was made that during any negotiation on Kashmir Pakistan should not be ignored. This communication had been brought by

the Pakistani High Commissioner, Mr. Arshad Hussain, who had gone to Pakistan few days back to acquaint his Government with the diplomatic and political activities relating to Kashmir.

The phase of talks continued. Some top and influential Indian leaders including Mr. Rajgopalacharya, former Governor General, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya had meetings with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the attempts for clarification and removal of misunderstandings between Kashmiri leaders and New Delhi continued. An idea of having a roundtable conference of Kashmiri leaders was mooted and Dr. Karan Singh, who was then a Union Minister, put forth a suggestion for division of the State on regional consideration by separating the Jammu region from the Valley. This idea was described by the Sheikh worthless and not fit for acceptance. Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi admitted at a news conference that she had talks with the Sheikh regarding some internal changes in Kashmir.

Mr. Kosygin arrived in New Delhi on January 25, 1968 alongwith a high level delegation but his week-long efforts to negotiate over the Kashmir issue did not bear any fruit. New Delhi also did not permit Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to meet Mr. Kosygin. After the failure of these negotiations Pakistan's Minister for Trade, Abdul Gafoor Khan, and the Pakistani High Commissioner, Mr. Arshad Hussain, met Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mirza Afzal Beg too was present during these talks. The Sheikh and his associate, Mirza Afzal Beg, assured the Pakistani officials that no step would be taken on Kashmir without active participation of Pakistan. And the Sheikh was extended

a renewed invitation for visiting Pakistan for discussion but the Government of India did not permit him to visit Pakistan. In the end Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had left dismayed with his talks with various Union leaders and returned to Srinagar on March 4, 1968. In Srinagar he once again assured people that he would not do any bargaining on the basic rights of the people for which they had been fighting all these years. He undertook tour of the Valley and in various public rallies he assured people that he will continue his struggle so long a solution, acceptable to India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir, was not found out.

On the international scene the Soviet Premier left for Rawalpindi from Moscow on April 15, 1968 before having a meeting with the Indian Ambassador, Mr. Kewal Singh, who had spent one week in New Delhi for consultations with central leaders. Mr. Kosygin and Mr. Kewal Singh discussed Kashmir in Moscow and the Soviet Premier took up the matter with President Ayub Khan during his four day stay in Rawalpindi. Mr. Kosygin had suggested to President Ayub Khan that matters of dispute between India and Pakistan could be settled one by one in various phases. But Pakistan turned down this suggestion and said that it wanted Kashmir issue to be settled first of all. The Ayub-Kosygin talks failed and Mr. Kosygin on his way back to Moscow from Islamabad paid a brief visit to New Delhi and he briefed the Indian leaders about his talks with President Ayub. A week after these unsuccessful talks Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to New Delhi to find out to what extent Mr. Kosygin had succeeded in his mission on Kashmir. Two days after his arrival in New Delhi the Pakistani High Com-

missioner, Mr. Arshad Hussain, (who had by then been appointed by President Ayub Khan his Foreign Minister in place of Mr. Bhutto) had a three-hour long meeting with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Mr. Arshad Hussain besides briefing the Sheikh about Ayub-Kosygin talks and their implications had told him that Pakistan was not prepared to accept any unilateral and undemocratic decision on Kashmir. Mr. Arshad Hussain also referred to reports reaching Pakistan that through the Soviet intervention New Delhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had reached some understanding. But Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah assured him that any such solution or settlement which ignored Pakistan would be unacceptable to the people of Kashmir.

When the Sheikh returned to Srinagar on May 8, 1968 he mooted an idea of holding all Parties convention which was given the name of "Kashmir People's Convention". Although the Sheikh appeared to be adamant on the aim of finding a solution which could be acceptable to India, Pakistan and people of Kashmir yet an attempt was afoot to have some internal solution and the "People's Convention" was a string in this connection. Which of the leaders will participate in the convention? This question remained a matter of dispute for two months and during this period Mrs. Indira Gandhi visited Kashmir on June 18, 1968. In Srinagar she inaugurated a session of the National Integration Council. The session was attended by all prominent leaders of India. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his associates had been invited to the conference but they did not participate. Towards the last week of June an agreement was reached over the list of invitees to the "People's Convention" and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah became the Chairman of the

Steering Committee and Mr. Prem Nath Bazaz its convenor. Leaders of different political thought from Jammu and Kashmir were invited to the convention and this included the Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, Syed Mir Qasim, Prem Nath Dogra and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. But Mr. Sadiq and Syed Mir Qasim refused to participate whereas others including the Bakshi attended the convention. Peoples' reaction to the holding of the convention was not favourable because they believed that their leaders were deviating from the real objective and voices against the convention started being raised in different parts of the Valley and the Youth, especially students, started agitating against it. The Government put down this agitation with a firm foot and number of people were jailed.

The "People's Convention" was inaugurated on October 10, 1968 by Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, who had reached Srinagar on October 6, in the historic building of Mujahid Manzil. Prior to the opening of the convention Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, in a statement, described the decision of Mr. G.M. Sadiq not to participate as a matter of regret when the convention could prove as an experiment in starting a new phase for compromise, in the State. In his inaugural address Mr. Narayan said that since the entire situation had changed he would suggest to Kashmiri leaders to change their ideas and approach. Next day while addressing a public meeting at Hazuribagh, he announced that the demand for plebiscite had become obsolete and, therefore, the Kashmiri leaders should search for a new path. This resulted in a demonstration against him in the public rally and it was left to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to restore order when he declared that "no power in the world could deprive people of Kashmir of

their basic rights". He also said that "freedom could not be secured through doles, it had to be wrested" and "we will get it". Mr. Narayan stated in the press club, the next day, that "plebiscite and the issue of restoration of 1953 position were impossible and I was trying to arrange talks between the Kashmiri leaders and New Delhi so that some solution could be evolved within the frame-work of the Indian Constitution. And "People's Convention" could prove helpful in this direction".

In the "People's Convention" the supporters of plebiscite adopted tough postures. Though the invitees from Azad Kashmir could not come but two to three London based persons from Mirpur had represented the convention on their own. In this convention suggestions and counter suggestions were put forth for solving the Kashmir issue. As many as 18 suggestions were in favour of India, 16 in favour of Kashmir's independence, six suggestions in favour of keeping Kashmir under the UN supervision and 11 in favour of accession of Kashmir to Pakistan. The suggestions that favoured Kashmir's accession to India were put forth by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, four by those Kashmiris who were linked with the ruling Congress and the remaining 13 from Jammu Dogras. Though the sponsors of the convention did not admit any failure, it could not generate any solid and substantial result. In the convention it was announced that the Sheikh would hold talks with President Ayub of Pakistan and the Indian Government in the light of deliberations of the "People's Convention" and then fix a date for another session.

When I asked Mr. G.M. Sadiq as to why he did-

not attend the convention he made a strange revelation - "these New Delhi wall as too are strange. They opposed the convention during their talks with us but on the other side they are starting a dialogue with the sponsors and leaders of the convention. And if Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had agreed to resume power, I am prepared to relinquish my office. But all such matters should be made clear and needed elaboration, I am not in favour of saying one thing in the public overtly and try for something contrary covertly. I want the Sheikh to join the national mainstream and if he does, it will be a great pleasure to me."

The aims of the convention and the debate that took place in it disappointed Kashmiris and started getting sceptical of the intentions of the leadership. Not only this even the leading participants in the convention were plagued with differences on the Kashmir question. This came in the way of issuing a joint communique at the end of the session. There was virtual quarrel among members of the steering committee for two days with the result no such communique was issued. Instead two resolutions were adopted by the convention on its last sitting. The first resolution was moved by Moulvi Farooq which had suggested that such a solution of Kashmir should be found which could be acceptable to the people of Kashmir. The second resolution was moved by Mr. Moti Lal Misri, an advocate which said that attempts be made to bring about improvement in the relations between India and Pakistan.

When Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan returned to New Delhi he suggested to the Centre to permit Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to meet President Ayub Khan of Pakistan in connection with the "People's Convention".

New Delhi turned down Mr. Narayan's suggestion but it agreed to hold talks with the Sheikh for any kind of internal settlement. Mr. Narayan informed the Sheikh about it and after this some Union Ministers and Mohammad Yunus Salim, special representative of Mrs. Gandhi, came to Srinagar to exchange ideas with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. On the basis of these talks the Sheikh sent his confident Mirza Afzal Beg to Delhi where he held detailed talks with Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan and the Central leaders and a compromise on certain subjects was evolved. After coming back to Srinagar he acquainted the Sheikh about his talks with the Indian leaders.

During this period Mr. G.M. Sadiq was summoned to New Delhi for consultations. On this return to Srinagar he told me, "something is coming up between Sheikh Abdullah, his associates and New Delhi and if every thing is settled between the two parties, the Plebiscite Front leadership will accept Kashmir's accession to India. It can be possible for them to get power on account of this *sacrifice*". The atmosphere of suspicion and uncertainty in Kashmir had dismayed the people here and for removing this suspicion the working committee of the Front held a meeting on November 17, 1968 in which a resolution was adopted and through this resolution it was declared that the Kashmir problem should be solved through Plebiscite. On December 8, 1968 a meeting of the Steering Committee of the "People's Convention" was called but the meeting lasted for only two hours. In the first week of December 1968 the British Foreign Minister came to Delhi where he offered his good offices to mediate between India and Pakistan on Kashmir but this was not accepted by New Delhi. Before going to Rawalpindi the British Foreign Minister

had a meeting with Mr. Rajgopalacharya in Madras. And Rajaji in his weekly "Swarajya" made a suggestion that for 10 years Kashmir be placed under the UN Control and after that the issue should be settled through an impartial plebiscite.

On January 2, 1969 the Shah of Iran came to New Delhi and during his 10-days stay he suggested negotiations between India and Pakistan, based on mutual interest, on the Kashmir issue but he too did not succeed.

In Kashmir the situation on the political front remained silent and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah limited his activities to Muslim Aqaf administration and occasional speeches making on organisational matters during the Plebiscite Front meetings. On the other side in Pakistan people had started getting up against President Ayub's regime with the result the situation in that country had become uncertain. This was accompanied by reports of concentration of Chinese and the Russian troops on the Northern borders. And on March 25, 1969 President Ayub Khan had to step down and handed over the charge to the Army Chief, General Yahya Khan. These changes had reactions in Kashmir and out of dismay the Plebiscite Front announced to participate in the Assembly by-elections which was somehow welcomed by New Delhi. There was no reaction to this decision in the Valley and despite this the Plebiscite Front demanded from the Chief Election Commissioner to provide it an opportunity for making preparations for the elections to the five Assembly seats which were vacant. It demanded that the polling be postponed by three months to allow it to prepare itself. The Chief Election Commissioner put forth one condition to the

Front for enabling him to postpone the election. The condition was that the plebiscite Front should first announce acceptance of Kashmir's accession to India. After such announcement alone the Commission could consider the demand for postponing the by-elections. This forced the Front to remain away from the election field but still the Sheikh sent Mr. Beg and Mr. G.M. Shah to New Delhi to find out some way so that the Front could contest the by-elections. Mr. Sadiq too was summoned to Delhi but despite talks and persuasion the two Front leaders returned empty handed. Thus, by-elections were held without the Front's participation.

On May 5, 1969 President of India, Dr. Zakir Hussain, suddenly passed away and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his associates left for New Delhi to participate in the last rites. The Sheikh got a chance to exchange his views with Mrs. Gandhi, Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai, and Pakistan's Air Chief, Noor Khan, who had come to Delhi to represent his country in the last rites of President of India. But nothing concrete came out of these talks. After this the Plebiscite Front decided to contest Panchayat elections and another session of the Steering Committee of the "People's Convention" was held where a decision was taken to find a "new way" for resolving the dispute. Soon after this decision the Union Home Minister, Mr. Y.B. Chavan, arrived in Srinagar to consult the Governor and the Chief Minister on the changing attitude of the Plebiscite Front.

From the American side another attempt was made to settle the dispute between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and in this connection the US Foreign Secretary, Mr. Rogers, visited New Delhi and Rawal-

pindi for the first time. But when his suggestions were not accepted by New Delhi, he returned without any success.

In the meantime the General Council of the Plebiscite Front held its session in Srinagar where it decided to participate in the elections for democratic institutions. This internal development was followed by an external development in the shape of renewed efforts of the Soviet Union to settle the issue when it found that the Rogers Mission had failed. The Russian Premier, Mr. Kosygin, went to Rawalpindi again where he proposed a new formula to Pakistan leaders. The formula aimed at softening the borders between India, Pakistan and Afghanistan but this proposal could not be acceptable to Pakistan. This way Kosygin's mission failed again it, America restarted her efforts and the US President, Mr. Nixon, came to New Delhi on July 31, 1969 with yet another new formula. He discussed this formula with the Indian Prime Minister and other leaders in detail but New Delhi rejected this American formula too. President Nixon later went to Pakistan where too he discussed the new formula with Pakistani leaders but since India had rejected it, the importance of accepting or rejecting the suggestion by Pakistan had virtually ceased.

After the failure of the Nixon mission the Plebiscite Front started getting closer to New Delhi. This resulted in opposition by some Front leaders. A faction headed by Munshi Mohammad Ishaq, who had twice acted as President of the Front, criticised the change in heart of the Front leadership. On August 7, 1969 he stoutly told a Press Conference that the Front leadership was deviating from the basic ideals by desiring to

have an understanding with New Delhi. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mr. Beg termed Munshi Ishaq and his associates as betrayers and dishonest and they were thrown out of the party. Since New Delhi had not fully compromised for a internal settlement, the Plebiscite Front, therefore, did not want to make public its deviation from the basic stand. But Munshi Ishaq's exposure of Front's leadership resulted in demonstration against the reports of change in the attitude of the leadership. Srinagar witnessed big demonstrations and the Government headed by Mr. G.M. Sadiq had to use tear gas and lathis to control demonstrations. The Government made full use of its power to curb agitation and large number of people were arrested and there were more arrests in other parts of the Valley than Srinagar where it totalled 130. The agitation spread to other parts of the Valley and 24 hour curfew had to be imposed in Srinagar, Sopore and Baramullah. A big hartal was organised to give expression to people's anger and anxiety. Protest processions were taken out in Srinagar, Islamabad, Sopore, Bandipora, Baramullah and Handwara.

On August 23, 1969 Srinagar was scene of massive demonstrations and the police had to open fire at Habbakadal to control the situation, in which one person was killed on the spot and over a dozen persons were injured. As the people indulged in arson 24 hour curfew was clamped on some interior areas of the city. Mr. Sadiq with the support of the Plebiscite Front curbed the agitation. The agitators even tried to set on fire the main market at Zainakadal and curfew remained inforce for 96 hours at Sopore and for one week in Srinagar. The situation had so much deteriorated that the Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, had to come to

Sriganar on September, 1, 1969. She stayed in Srinagar for four days and advised the State Congress party leaders to try for unity with the Sheikh. This was strongly supported by Syed Mir Qasim but the Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, could not agree on it. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah kept himself busy with non-political activities and for this, a plan for constructing a new building for the Hazratbal shrine and a fund collection drive were started. He, however, continued to keep in touch with New Delhi.

When Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan visited New Delhi on October 1, 1969, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went there to exchange views with him on Kashmir and invited him to visit Kashmir. But the Khan did not come to the Valley when he came to know that the people of Kashmir had no high regard for him and he would not be welcomed. Instead, he issued a press statement on October 11, 1969 in which he said, "I support people of Kashmir in India in the same way as I support the rights of Pathans in Pakistan. Still people of Kashmir should be consulted on it. "On this occasion a joint plan on behalf of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, for negotiating between the Sheikh and New Delhi, was put up. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah agreed to hold talks on the new plan and New Delhi promised to consider it seriously. This plan also was based on the suggestions of compromise for bringing the Sheikh and the Centre closer and that was the reason that Mr. Sadiq's willingness was secured. But the relations between Mr. Sadiq and Syed Mir Qasim had become strained on this issue. Since Syed Mir Qasim enjoyed support of a large section in New Delhi, it wanted Mr. Qasim to replace Mr. Sadiq as the Chief Minister. But Mrs. Indira Gandhi was not prepared to take such a big

step and in reality she was annoyed with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. She had doubts and she believed that if there was any compromise with the Sheikh, it would not prove lasting.

Mrs. Gandhi herself was facing stiff opposition within her party which resulted in factionalism in the Indian National Congress. The one was headed by Mrs. Gandhi and the other by Mr. Morarji Desai. The rift in the Jammu and Kashmir Congress gave an opportunity to the Plebiscits Front to live in confidence though people were unhappy with it. Mr. Sadiq's attitude towards New Delhi was getting stiff and his differences with Syed Mir Qasim had further widened when the latter received support and patronage from the Union Home Minister, Mr. Y.B. Chavan. Mr. Chavan came to Srinagar to iron out all the differences between Mr. Qasim and Mr. Sadiq, there was confrontation between him and Sadiq in the Guest House. Mr. Chavan told Mr. Sadiq: "the differences between you and Qasim are intolerable for New Delhi since they are not in the interest of the nation. Therefore, you should make an honourable settlement with Mr. Qasim." Mr. Sadiq who was already annoyed lost control over Mr. Chavan's instructions which appeared to him to be like orders and replied, "you are Home Minister; if you want to talk to me on matters pertaining to law and order, I am prepared. I cannot talk to you on organisational matters." This angered Mr. Chavan who shot back at Sadiq "You accept what I say otherwise you have to go." On hearing this Mr. Sadiq left the room and when he came down the steps his feet were shaking. He angrily rushed to his car without speaking to the waiting newsman and left for his residence. After this Mr. Chavan talked to Mr. Qasim for two and a half hours and next

day left for New Delhi.

Those days Kashmir witnessed large incidents of mysterious fires and nobody, either in the city or villages, though himself safe. These fires were taking place under a plan though the Government was concealing it stoutly.

After the split in the Congress Mrs. Gandhi emerged quite powerful and Mr. V.V. Giri got elected as President of India with her support. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah started his negotiations with Mr. Giri on Kashmir affairs. While commenting on the talks the Sheikh held with Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Y.B. Chavan in New Delhi, Mirza Afzal Beg said that the Kashmir leader was discussing the possibility of getting permission for participating in the forthcoming elections. In this connection the President of the Plebiscite Front had a detailed discussion with the Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. Verma. The Front appeared to be adopting a dual policy simultaneously. Since the people had developed the impression that the Plebiscite Front had deviated from the basic ideals and stand, the General Secretary Mr. G.M. Shah, issued a statement, in order to remove this impression, that the Front wanted to participate in the elections so that the Kashmir issue was settled according to the wishes of the people.

Pakistan continued to keep a watch on the situation. President Yahya Khan sent a communication to the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, in which he had conveyed India that Kashmir dispute could be settled on the basis of the Tashkent Declaration. Any other attempt in this direction was not to be accepted by Pakistan.

When finally the Plebiscite Front announced its decision to participate in the elections, it did not generate any special support from the people in the Valley. Sensing this attitude of the people the Sheikh told a news conference in New Delhi, "I cannot abandon the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir. I cannot give up this demand in view of the sacrifices rendered by the People." On the other side of the ceasefire line the decision of the Front contest elections had caused severe reaction and resentment. There it was being speculated that the Plebiscite Front had deviated from its basic principle. In February 1970 there was increase in troop movement on the borders and armed skirmishes had begun. During this period two messengers came to Srinagar, from Azad Kashmir, secretly and met Moulvi Farooq in the Mirwaiz Manzil. These messengers instructed the Moulvi to try for keeping people away from the field of elections. Accordingly Moulvi Farooq, while addressing a public meeting at Jama Masjid on February 20, 1970 announced to boycott the elections. The Plebiscite Front received further set-back by this announcement. Two days after this announcement Mrs. Gandhi invited Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to lunch and the luncheon meeting lasted for two hours. Both these leaders agreed upon making the "People's Convention" to reach some solid results. The Centre also agreed to allow some Kashmiri representatives settled in Pakistan, to come to Srinagar for attending the next session of the "People's Convention" so that the decisions of the convention could have valid political importance. And those Front leaders, who had been under detention, were being released gradually. This way Mrs. Gandhi wanted to kill two birds with one stone; on one hand an attempt was being made to make the Sheikh agree to give up the

basic demand by starting negotiations with him (Sheikh) and on the other hand a campaign was afoot to move vote of non-confidence against Mr. Sadiq in the State Assembly. Mr. Sadiq knew the situation and by using his powers got the Legislative Assembly prorogued. That very evening Mr. Sadiq told me on telephone, "now only two ways are left for New Delhi. One, it can dismiss me the way Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed in 1953, second it can dissolve the Assembly and impose Governor's rule. "Next day Mrs. Gandhi summoned Mr. Sadiq and Syed Mir Qasim to New Delhi where the Sheikh was already present. The Plebiscite Front took note of the opportunity and demanded dissolution of the State Assembly. This demand made legislators panicky because they were not elected in the real sense by the people and had no hope of getting re-elected. Earlier, on March 14, 1970 thirty two members of the State Assembly went to New Delhi and met Mrs. Gandhi on March 18, 1970. These Legislators demanded that they be given the permission to elect a new leader in place of Mr. Sadiq but this was vehemently turned down by Mrs. Gandhi. One Congress M.L.A. Mr. Abdul Gani Lone, who was a supporter of Mr. Qasim, told me, on his return from New Delhi, that Mrs. Gandhi had insulted all of them when they demanded permission to elect a new leader. She had told them that she knew how they had been elected to the Assembly which caused stoney silence in the dissident camp. "We all felt humiliated when Mrs. Gandhi virtually reprimanded us," Lone said. He revealed that the Prime Minister had told them, "Whom do you represent? Is there anyone among you who can claim that he has been elected on the basis of the votes of the electorates? You have become members because of our help and support hence it is our duty to see who remains the Chief Minister of

the State. The way you have come, you return the same way." The members returned though Mr. Qasim and Mr. Sadiq met Mrs. Gandhi separately.

The attempt of the Congress Legislature Party to replace Mr. G.M. Sadiq failed. The session of the State Assembly was reconvened and in the house MLAs belonging to the ruling Congress unwillingly and under the Centre's pressure supported Mr. G.M. Sadiq and the finance bill for the year 1970-71 was passed. Side by side the Plebiscite Front started pre-election activities and asked people to consider it as one of the attempts to settle the Kashmir problem. The Front leaders also started meeting Mr. Sadiq and announced that it was participating in the Municipal elections. The youth, especially students, started agitation against this announcement. An official spokesman told newsmen in Srinagar that reports of arson on a big scale had been received and in the mysterious fires 1500 houses had been gutted and number of villages had been burnt. During this time Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah revisited Delhi where he had talks with Mrs. Gandhi and other central leaders. After these talks it was indicated that New Delhi had gone back on its commitment to allow some representatives from Azad Kashmir to participate in the "People's Convention" next session. On his way back the Sheikh opened the election campaign at Doda where he said that participation in the elections had no link with the basic issues of the right of self-determination on the basis of which alone the matter could be solved.

On May 31, 1970 the Steering Committee of the "People's Convention" met in Srinagar under the chairmanship of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah where

Kashmir's political situation was discussed. After its session the Sheikh told a public rally that law and order had deteriorated in Kashmir and the present Government should be dismissed. The Sheikh also convened an All Party's Conference where mutual discussion was held on the internal situation in Kashmir. After the Conference it was stated that in the mysterious fires over 3,000 houses had been gutted by then. A week later second session of the "People's Convention" was convened in which different solutions, presented by different quarters, were discussed. While inaugurating the convention the Sheikh said that the purpose of the convention was to find an agreed solution to the Kashmir dispute which could be submitted to India and Pakistan. A resolution from Azad Kashmir was read out which had suggested that Kashmir should remain a buffer State. Judged from the proceedings of the convention it became apparent that there could be no agreed solution to the Kashmir problem because people of different shades of opinion were participating. One section of opinion favoured Kashmir's accession to India, another supported merger with Pakistan and the third was in favour of independence. On the last day severe differences erupted over the definition of secularism and there was conflict over it because of ideological differences. This way the attempt to find some unanimous solution to the Kashmir problem failed.

Soon after this Mrs. Gandhi arrived in Srinagar on July 14, 1970 where she discussed the internal problems with the Government leaders. On the second day of her arrival students and the youth staged a violent demonstration against the delay in solving the Kashmir issue and curtailment of civil liberties. The Police mercilessly lathi charged the demonstrators and dozens

of them were arrested. After returning to Delhi Mrs. Gandhi summoned the Chief Minister and top Government officers where a decision was taken to initiate new strategy for dealing with the internal situation of Kashmir.

The student agitation spread to other parts of the Valley where law and order was completely disturbed. In the meanwhile former Kashmir Prime Minister, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, initiated an idea to dissolve the National Conference and merge it with the Congress. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to New Delhi on August 15, 1970 as he felt some change in the Indian policy. In Delhi he also attended Insani Baradari (Human brotherhood) convention which was sponsored by Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan. Speaking in the convention the Sheikh advised the Indian Muslims not to revive the Muslim League. Mr. Narayan and the Sheikh were made chairman and vice-chairman of the convention respectively. The aim of the convention was to strengthen the secular forces. On the other side the Plebiscite Front had completed its preparations for the elections and while inaugurating the election campaign at Pampore, 12 kilometres from Srinagar, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah appealed to people to vote for the Front. But contrary to it Moulvi Farooq started his campaign for boycotting the elections. On the international level Mrs. Gandhi discussed the Kashmir issue in Moscow with the Russian leaders while Pakistani President, Yahya Khan, had talks on the issue with President Nixon in Washington.

The Congress too started its election campaign and both the Plebiscite Front and the Congress began attacking each other at public meetings. The Congress leaders

accused the Front of having deviated from its basic stand of the right of self-determination for the sake of achieving power. And the Plebiscite Front leaders told people that if the Front was voted to power it would get the Kashmir issue settled. Repeatedly the Front leaders would assured people that the Front's struggle, aimed at holding the plebiscite and not gaining power, would continue. When people started getting restless, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to Pulwama on November 20, 1970 where he said at a public meeting, "Although I have grown old yet you should always remember it that so long I am alive, I shall continue to fight for Kashmiri's rights, justice and their birth right of self-determination". He also announced, "I have started the work of constructing a new building at the Hazratbal Shrine and I require Rs. 50 lakhs for this project. I hope people will donate maney for this." New Delhi was worried over the elections and it tried to forge a united front of all pro-India forces including the Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, Syed Mir Qasim and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad.

On the other side of the border Yahya Khan held elections in which the People's Party won in West Pakistan and the Awami League emerged victorious in East Pakistan. The election results had no reaction in Kashmir but people started getting concerned because it was presumed that the election results might cause division of Pakistan. The situation was fast changing and tension and uncertainty were spreading in the whole sub-continent. What actually was boiling inside nobody knew. Suddenly Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Kashmir was announced and along this report of dissolution of the Lok Sabha and holding of midterm elections started gaining currency. On December 22, 1970 Mrs. Gandhi

paid an unscheduled visit to Ladakh bordering China's territory. Next day on her arrival in Jammu she told a press conference, "the Plebiscite Front will not be allowed to contest the elections so long it does not change its ideal. Replying a question from a Correspondent that how the Plebiscite Front could be prevented from participating in the elections? Mrs. Gandhi said, "ways and means will be found to prevent them". This announcement had a dismal reaction in the Plebiscite Front camp and the Front leaders declared that they could not deviate from the basic demand for grant of right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir and they too stood by their decision to contest the elections. On December 23, 1970 Mrs. Indira Gandhi arrived in Srinagar from Jammu where she announced, "I speak as Prime Minister of India and this is the opinion of the entire country that we will not tolerate any talk against our territorial integrity. Some people say that after taking an oath of loyalty to the constitution they will get elected to the State Assembly and then break the constitution in the Assembly. We will not allow this to happen." She also declared that whatever had to be done to restrict the Plebiscite Front from contesting the elections will be done. And on her return to New Delhi dissolution of the Lok Sabha to be followed by mid-term poll on March 1, 1971 was announced. This announcement was followed by a statement that Mirza Afzal Beg, Mr. Mubarak Shah and Mr. G.M. Shah will be the Plebiscite Front candidates for the Lok Sabha elections Islamabad, Baramulla and Srinagar constituencies respectively. After this announcement Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to Delhi to discuss the new situation and during this period the Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq was in Bombay Hospital under treatment.

14

ALFATAH AND 1971 WAR

Only after one week of Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Srinagar and the Plebiscite Fronts' announcement to participate in the elections, the University Branch of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank was looted in dramatic way by a gang of armed men in police uniform exactly at noon of January 2, 1971. The entire cash of Rs. one lakh was taken away from the Bank Manager at pistol point by the armed men who had garbed themselves in police uniform. They kidnapped the Bank Manager and the Cashier who were later released three miles away from the scene of robbery. The armed men escaped in a car in which they had come to loot the Bank. The Bank Cashier had recognised one of the armed-men because he happened to be his classmate in S.P. College, Srinagar.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who was in Delhi boarded a plane at the Palam Airport in the morning of January 8, 1971 when his talks did not yield any results, for returning to Srinagar but the flight scheduled for Srinagar was cancelled at the last moment mysteriously. The airport authorities announced that a bomb had been placed inside the plane.

The passengers were told that they could fly the next day. Mirza Afzal Beg was in Jammu when Sheikh

Mohammad Abdullah and his son-in-law, Mr. G.M. Shah, who were in Delhi, were served a written order, January 9, 1971 at 5 a.m. in 3 Kotla Lane, that the State Government had banned their entry into Jammu and Kashmir under the Public Security Act. The same day the Chief Secretary, Mr. P.K. Dave, told a Press Conference in Srinagar about the ban orders. He disclosed that under the Act over 300 workers of the Plebiscite Front had been arrested, though in reality the number of arrested persons was three times more than the official figures. This was followed by a notification on January 14, 1971 from the Union Home Ministry according to which the Plebiscite Front was outlawed. Only three days after the notification was issued, on January 18, 1971 the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Surinder Nath Sethi, told newsmen in Srinagar that the police had unearthed a secret organisation called "Al Fatah" and 22 leading members of this organisation had been arrested. He said, "this organisation had attacked Tehsil Education Office at Pulwama on April 1, 1970 and had taken away Rs. 72,000 from the office. The amount was spent on widening and strengthening its activities and objectives. These activists had set up its secret headquarters at village Barsu, 14 miles south-east of Srinagar, where it had started armed activities for launching freedom struggle. The "Al Fatah" headquarters had been maintained in a house, away from the habitation, and Rs. 50,000 were spent on the construction of this house. Close to this house a farm had been purchased for Rs. 10,000 which had been reserved for the activities of the organisation. It had planned to snatch arms from the army personnel and loot State Bank of India Head Office in Srinagar. But later instead of it, it looted the University Branch of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank from where the leader of the gang, who had put on the

uniform of Deputy Superintendent of Police, took away Rs. one lakh from the Bank vault. This man had been identified by the Bank Cashier who happened to be his class fellow in the College. "The IGP gave the name of this person as Farooq son of Khwaja Abdul Khaliq Bhat, a former M.L.A. of ruling Congress. Farooq Bhat had disclosed everything about the secret organisation during his interrogation. The police went to Barsu to undertake a search of the headquarter, but there ensued an encounter between the "Al Fatah" men and the armed police. The "Al Fatah" men surrendered their arms when their ammunition got exhausted and this way the police occupied their headquarters. Later other members of this organisation were arrested from different parts of the Valley and their number was over 250. Five days later the Deputy Inspector General Police, Pir Ghulam Hassan Shah, told newsmen that the "aim of the 'Al Fatah' was to start a guerrilla warfare for the freedom of Kashmir and for this the youth were being trained at a secret place in a forest by a Brigadier, Asgar Khan, two Colonels, Bashir Ahmed and Mr. Alvi, and one Major, Zaffar Ahmed, from Pakistan." He revealed that the police had seized number of maps of military importance, rifles, grenades and one type-writer. Kashmir Students Federation, Youngman's League and some other student organisations were associated with the "Al Fatah". The training field and the headquarter had been linked by an underground passage. A tunnel was being dug between the Barsu headquarter and the river Jehlum which could be utilised at the proper time. Two magistrates, three doctors and six professors, who were associated with this secret organisation, had been arrested. After the arrest of the "Al Fatah" members the youth and students felt discouraged to a large extent. According to one report the number of arrested people

belonging to the Plebiscite Front and student organisations had risen to over 2,000.

A week after this disclosure a Fokker Friendship plane of Indian Airlines which was flying from Srinagar to Jammu, was hijacked to Lahore in a meaningful and mysterious manner. But the Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, opened the secret of this hijacking when, in a statement, he said that "the plane had not been hijacked by a freedom fighter but by paid agent of the Border Security Force." He gave the name of the agent as Hashim Qureshi. Mr. Sadiq also said that the Government had, several times, "asked the Border Security Force Officials to hand over Hashim Qureshi to Kashmir Police as it had reports of his frequent visits to Pakistan. But the BSF officials refused to do so on the plea that Hashim Qureshi was working under a plan for them." The hijackers set aflame the plane at the Lahore airport without informing the Government of Pakistan but the airport authorities were able to rescue its 26 passengers who later returned to India. The two hijackers, Hashim Qureshi and Ashraf were arrested and imprisoned and tried for having conspired against Pakistan. The real events, which became apparent, behind this incident revealed that the way India was supporting the move for segregating East Pakistan from the West, Hijacking of the plane was a link in this chain. It was on the basis of this hijacking that India lanned air flights between the West and East Pakistan over the Indian territory. It may not be out of place to mention here that the day the plane was hijacked from Srinagar eight BSF personnel including some officers were present at the airport. When an officer of the Kashmir Police enquired about the reason of their presence at the airport they said "Al Fatah people are going and we have come

to see them off." This very sentence was carried by a New Delhi newspaper next day.

This was followed by the period of February Lok Sabha poll and in this elections Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad untested as a Congress candidate from the Srinagar constituency. One Independent candidate, Shamim Ahmed Shamim, was pitted against him. Shamim Ahmed Shamim managed to get support from Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who straightway appealed to Srinagar voters from New Delhi to vote for Shamim. Besides, this Begum Abdullah was sent to Srinagar to muster support for Shamim against the Bakshi. On her arrival to Srinagar she brought Maulana Masoodi and Mr. G.M. Karra in her fold and for the first time people here showed extraordinary interest in the elections. And a candidate was elected to the democratic institution as per the votes and wishes of the people. This election had its historic novelty because on the polling day there were long queues of men and women voters outside each polling booth. Despite snowfall thousands of voters came out to cast their votes. In this election people were able to make their power accepted and Mrs. Gandhi's candidate, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, lost to Shamim Ahmed Shamim who was supported by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi got overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha and along this war-like tense situation between India and Pakistan developed. In Pakistan Sheikh Mujib-ul-Rehman who headed the Awami League, adopted tough postures. And after prolonged talks in Dacca, President Yahya Khan on his return to Karachi announced, in a Radio Broad-

cast, that since Mujib was adamant on segregating East Pakistan from the West, therefore, the Awami League had been declared outlawed. It was also announced by Pakistan that India had started armed infiltration on the Eastern borders of Pakistan. More than 60 lakh refugees from East Pakistan had migrated to India. The war-like situation between India and Pakistan created unpleasant reaction in Kashmir and the youth and students started agitation in Srinagar.

Anger and anxiety, against internal situation in Kashmir, against the Indian interference in East Pakistan and the move for segregation East Pakistan from the West, gripped people of the Valley. Shortly Srinagar and other parts of the Valley became a scene of demonstrations and arson and everyday dozens of persons were arrested, houses searched and others intimidated. But the situation could not be brought under control. This caused anxiety in New Delhi and both the Governor and the Chief Minister were summoned twice to Delhi where they were instructed to make every effort for maintaining law and order. To take stock of the situation herself the Prime Minister came to Srinagar on June 18, 1971. She toured Islamabad and Baramulla districts too. She visited the borders and addressed the jawans at number of places. Before returning to New Delhi she addressed Press Conference in the Srinagar Guest House, where she was asked by me "Will she accept the suggestion of meeting General Yahya Khan for reducing the Indo-Pak tension?" She outrightly turned down this suggestion. When I wanted to know her opinion about reviewing ban order served on Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the decision of having treated the Plebiscite Front as an

illegal organisation, the Prime Minister strongly rejected the plea for any review.

The tension between India and Pakistan over the issue of East Pakistan developed to such an extent that the diplomatic relations between the two countries were severed and on the Western front armed skirmishes between the two sides began to be a regular feature. Majority of nations were concerned over the situation in the sub-continent and even the United Nations too tried for a settlement but it did not succeed. On August 18, 1971 the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Gromyko, came to New Delhi alongwith a high level delegation of army officers and an agreement of friendship for the period of 20 years was signed between the two countries under which the Soviet Union would assist India in case of any eventuality. The details of the agreement had been finalised between the Soviet Union and India well in advance and Mr. Gromyko had come to India simply to fulfill the formality of signing the agreement. Those Plebiscite Front leaders, who were not arrested, protested against the war-like condition between India and Pakistan and all of them were arrested and this included Sofi Mohammad Akbar from Sopore. A protest hartal was observed in the entire Valley on August 9, 1971 in which release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was demanded. And demonstrations were held against Indian interference in East Pakistan and her support to the move for separating the East from the West. This had its severe reaction in New Delhi and the Government of India expressed concern over the situation in Kashmir. In the mean time the Chief of the UN military observers in Kashmir also informed the UN Secretary General, U Thant, about the

growing restlessness in Kashmir. In order to have first hand picture of the situation the Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, came to Kashmir again on September 7, 1971 and held detailed consultations with the Government leaders and officers. After her return police pickets were posted at number of places in the Valley. The Shah of Iran, Mohammad Raza Shah Pahlvi, also attempted to negotiate between India and Pakistan but he could not succeed in his attempt to ward off war between the two sides. The Defence Minister, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, arrived in Srinagar on September 27, 1971 and discussed the internal situation of Kashmir with the Army Commanders with whom he also exchanged views on military matters. There was also concern in the Arab countries over the threat of war between India and Pakistan. President Sadat of Egypt summoned the Indian Ambassador in Cairo and sent through him a communication to the Indian Prime Minister appealing her not to support any move for disintegration of Pakistan.

During this time the Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant, came to New Delhi and Rawalpindi to negotiate but he failed. On November 3, 1971 the Indian armed forces were alerted for any action. President Yahya Khan told the Colombia Broadcasting Corporation, in an interview, that though India had not declared war against Pakistan, yet there was war on the borders between the two sides and the Pakistani territory was being attacked. On November 9, 1971 the Chief of UN Observers on the Kashmir Front, General Tsara, sent a communication to the UN Secretary General, U Thant, in which he informed him about the internal situation in

Kashmir and the armed skirmishes on the cease fire line. The Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, on December 2, 1971 demanded that Pakistan should vacate East Pakistan and recall her troops. That very evening it was announced that the attempt of Pakistani bombers to destroy Agartala airfield was foiled. Next day there was ground and air war between the two countries though no proper declaration to this effect was made. An official spokesman in New Delhi announced that India bombed Islamabad, Sargoda, Mianwali and Karachi airfields. The spokesman also said that the Indian Air Force had bombed Dacca, Chattagam and Jasoor and the land forces were marching ahead in the Eastern sector along with tanks and machine guns. The Indian naval force was ordered to undertake naval blockade of East Pakistan and either capture the naval warships coming from West Pakistan or destroy them. And on December 6, 1971 India announced recognition of Bangla Desh well before its emergence.

When the UN Security Council held its session in New York it made an appeal, through a resolution, to both India and Pakistan to stop war and withdraw their armed forces on the International border. The Soviet Union vetoed the resolution and the United States made a request for convening an emergency session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. In the General Assembly the Indian representative, Mr. Samar Sen, announced that India could not accept any suggestion which did not recognise East Pakistan as Bangla Desh. In the General Assembly the Arab and other Muslim countries blamed India for the situation and said that India foiled all attempts, including the one made by U Thant, to mediate in the dispute.

The war was on, when the Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, passed away on December 12, 1971 in a hospital in Chandigarh. The general public in Kashmir was so much disenchanted that nobody except the relatives, Congressmen and Government officers and officials attended his funeral procession and rites in Srinagar. The moment the Nimaz-e-Jinaza (funeral pray) was on in the Goalbagh area there was a dog fight in the air between the Sabre and the Gnat. After the death of Mr. Sadiq New Delhi appointed Mr. Qasim as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. On December 14, 1971 the Security Council again met to consider the situation in the sub-continent. It presented a resolution which called for cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of armed force to the International border but this resolution too was vetoed by the Soviet Union. Next day the reports of attack on Dacca, the march of the American 7th Fleet in the Bay of Bengal and concentration of the Chinese forces on the Northern frontiers were received. As the air attacks between India and Pakistan over Srinagar and war on the border continued, it was officially stated in New Delhi on December 17, 1971 that the Pakistani Army had surrendered in East Pakistan. On the same evening the Indian Prime Minister, in a Radio Broadcast, congratulated the Indian Defence forces and expressed pleasure over the formation of Bangla Desh. She announced that "we have stopped war" and after 16 hours of the ceasefire announcement the Pakistani President, General Yahya Khan, too accepted the ceasefire on the Western Front.

A day later a meeting of citizen's Council was convened in Srinagar under the Chairmanship of the Governor, Mr. Bhagwan Sahay, where Maulana Masoodi

announced, "the Kashmir dispute is behind the current war and the 1965 conflict between India and Pakistan and so long the dispute is not settled there can be no peace established between India and Pakistan."

On December 20, 1971 Mr. A.Z. Bhutto replaced General Yahya Khan as President of Pakistan and on assuming power he released Sheikh Mujib-ul-Rehman. He was sent to Dacca via London where he became the first Prime Minister of Bangla Desh. All these developments had severe reaction. In Kashmir and for boosting up the morals of the Pro-India leaders and the Government administration Mrs. Gandhi visited Kashmir on December, 29, 1971 and held detailed discussion with Government leaders on political and administrative matters.

1972 came with new problems for Kashmir and fresh curbs were placed on civil liberties in the name of maintaining law and order. New methods were adopted to curb people of the Valley who were demanding restoration of their civil rights and release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Syed Mir Qasim who had taken over as Chief Minister of the State had associated Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad with him so that the success of the ruling Congress in the coming Assembly elections was assured Mr. D.P. Dhar who had been India's Ambassador to the Soviet Union and later the Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee in the Ministry of External Affairs, and who played a prominent role in the formation of Bangla Desh was appointed Union Minister for Planning. Syed Mir Qasim enjoyed full support from Mr. Dhar and he rehabilitated his supporters on important posts. He also suggested to Mrs. Gandhi that till the

completion of Assembly elections, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah be kept in Delhi by continuing the curbs on him regarding his entry into Jammu and Kashmir. With regard to the elections the Plebiscite Front got divided into two factions which became apparent on Id Day on January 27, 1972 at the Idgah grounds where some supporters of the front dragged down Maulana Masoodi and his associates from the pandal. Mr. G.M. Karra and Mr. Mubarik Shah went to Delhi to discuss the issue of elections with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah but this meeting did not yeild any result. When Mr. Karra returned, he alongwith Maulana Masoodi were arrested and Begum Abdullah, who had gone to New Delhi to meet her husband, was restricted from entering into the State. This way the Congress warded off all the dangers it would have in the fields of elections. After the arrested of powerful forces and placement of curbs on vital forces from taking part in the elections, Moulvi Farooq and the Jamat-i-Islami took advantage of the situation and announced their participation in the poll. But they failed to achieve any significant success Moulvi Farooq's party could win only two seats and the Jamat-i-Islami five seats out of the total of seventy-five. On the other hand fresh negotiations with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were started in New Delhi. First some top officers of the Centre met the Sheikh and advised him to accept Kashmir's accession to India and after this Mr. D.P. Dhar had two sessions with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. This was followed by a meeting between the Sheikh and the Soviet Ambassador in India. The background of these negotiations were made known by the President of the Plebiscite Front, Mirza Afzal Beg, at a Press Conference in New Delhi on February 5, 1972. Mr. Beg announced at the Press

Conference, "we are prepared to hold talks with Government of India on the basis of internal autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir. We want durable links between Kashmir and India and the question of Kashmir's accession to India had become now irrelevant for us. I wish to make it clear that we had supported all aspects of the 1947 instrument of accession and we are prepared to hold talks any time for making this accession assured and permanent. "Mr. Beg also said, "under the auspices of the Government of India and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's leadership a plan for negotiating with the people of Kashmir could be evolved so that talks could be held regarding grant of internal autonomy for the States in the light of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Pakistan should be left alone to solve the internal problems and we are not adamant on plebiscite. I had already started considering changing the name of my party Plebiscite Front but now other members would have to be consulted because I do not want that I should be expelled from my party on this question." This statement of Mirza Afzal Beg had mixed reaction in New Delhi but there was no reaction on the Government circles. The political circles regarded Mr. Beg's statement as a new strategy and said that such people were "not fit for confidence." The Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Mr. I.K. Gujral, told me at his residence in New Delhi, "What Sheikh Abdullah and Mr. Beg could not achieve through confrontation now wanted to get it through clarification and affection. We cannot agree that they have changed their stand they have only changed their tactics. But we cannot be befooled". On February 28, 1972 the American President. Mr. Nixon, had talks with the Chinese leaders in Peking and after these talks a joint communique

was released in which Kashmir was also mentioned and stressed the need for resolving the Kashmir issue on the basis of the UN resolutions. The announcement from the two super powers had severe reaction in New Delhi and the Indian Government stepped up its efforts to woo Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. After the joint communique, issued in Peking, Mr. D.P. Dhar was suddenly sent to Moscow to discuss the matter with the Soviet leaders. On March 8, 1972 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said, in an interview with the London Times, that "our dispute with the Indian Government was not on accession but with regard to the quantum of the internal autonomy. Nobody should forget that we are the people who brought Kashmir to India otherwise could have never become part of India."

After D.P. Dhar's talks with the Russian leaders the Soviet Union invited President Bhutto to Moscow so that Russia could mediate between India and Pakistan. Mr. Bhutto was in Moscow for three days where a programme for negotiations with India was worked out. After the Congress victory in the State Assembly Syed Mir Qasim was re-elected as Chief Minister. Along this the Russian steps for mediation too were stepped up. On one side the Soviet Union was trying to mediate for normalising relations between India and Pakistan and on the other negotiations between New Delhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah too were on. After his return to New Delhi, Mr. D.P. Dhar met twice the Russian Ambassador in India. After two days of the meeting, the First Secretary of the Russian Embassy had a meeting with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah at his residence at Kotla Lane and this meeting lasted for one a half hour.

That very evening the Russian Ambassador met Mrs. Gandhi for half an hour. Next day, on March 29, 1972, the Prime Minister announced in the Lok Sabha that "we welcome the change in the outlook of the Plebiscite Front leaders because they have expressed willingness to accept Kashmir's accession to India". After the meeting between Mrs. Gandhi and the Soviet Ambassador, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh, was sent to Moscow on March 30, 1972 where he discussed Kashmir and the situation in the sub-continent with the Russian leaders. After his return from Moscow the Centre directed Syed Mir Qasim to release all political prisoners in the State. The State Government issued orders in April 1, 1972 revoking ban on the entry of Begum Abdullah into the State and also released Maulana Masoodi, Mr. G.M. Karra and other political prisoners. The Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim, was instructed to join hands with Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad to deal with new developing political situation. After detailed discussion with Syed Mir Qasim Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad announced formal merger of the National Conference with the Congress on April 4, 1972. After Mr. Swaran Singh's return from Moscow on April 4, 1972, Mrs. Gandhi sent a formal communication to Mr. Bhutto in which India proposed to hold high level talk between the two countries and this proposal was accepted by Mr. Bhutto. For finalising the agenda for the talks and other allied matters Mrs. Gandhi sent Mr. D.P. Dhar along with a delegation of 14 officers to Islamabad and after two days' discussion at Murri, the agenda was finalised. On one side the preparation for holding talks with Pakistan were afoot and on the other negotiations with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were on. After ban on Mirza Afzal Beg

was revoked he came to Jammu and had a two and a half hour's meeting with the Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim. After this meeting Mr. Beg told UNI "now the issue of Kashmir's accession to India was no longer a matter of dispute between India and us. It was now the question of seeing to what extent Kashmir was granted internal autonomy."

15

SIMLA AGREEMENT BEG-PARTHASARTHY TALKS

On his return from Pakistan on May 4, 1972 Mr. D.P. Dhar stated in New Delhi that he had suggested Srinagar as the venue for holding the summit conference but this suggestion was rejected by Pakistan. He also stated that Pakistan was pressing for a dialogue on Kashmir and "we have agreed on it." Mr. Dhar later came to Srinagar where he had detailed discussion with Syed Mir Qasim who told me, during an interview, that a new phase was beginning in the history of Kashmir in which he (Mr. Qasim) had to play a vital role. He also said, "I have also informed my colleagues about it." Mirza Afzal Beg came to Srinagar on May 10, 1972 and sensing the mood of the people he told a public meeting at Khanyar, "Kashmiris are not a flock of sheep that could be shared. We want success in the summit talks between India and Pakistan so that Rawalpindi road could be opened." On June 5, 1972 restrictions on Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah from entering into the State were removed but he did not come immediately to Srinagar. He stayed back in New Delhi where he expressed to UNI, in an interview, two contradictory views. On one side he said, "the basis of the relations between India and Kashmir depended on Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Our dispute with India was not on the issue of accession". He also stated, "If

India and Pakistan want to remain in peace, they should settle the Kashmir issue. This is the only solution for establishing durable peace in the sub-continent." On June 12, 1972 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had an hour long meeting with Mrs. Gandhi in New Delhi and then announced that he would come to Srinagar on June 19, 1972. Both the Sheikh and Mr. Beg, who was also in New Delhi, expressed satisfaction over the former's talks with the Prime Minister and said that they would start talks on the constitutional matters to work out a settlement between Kashmir and New Delhi. For holding these talks Mrs. Gandhi nominated Mr. G. Parthasarthy, Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah nominated Mirza Afzal Beg for this purpose. With the beginning of Beg-Parthasarthy talks there was a reaction of dismay among the people of Kashmir. For removing this "misunderstanding" contradictory statements started getting issued from the Plebiscite Front leaders. When people started expressing concern over these developments Mr. Beg was immediately sent to Srinagar and while making clarification he told a congregation at Hazratbal, on June 14, 1972, that people should not be carried away by the "misleading propaganda by some opportunists." He told them to remember that sovereignty is the right of the people and "whatever decision will be taken would be in accordance with the opinion of the public." Mr. G. Parthasarthy too came to Srinagar and took stock of the situation in Kashmir and had an hour long meeting with Mr. Beg.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah arrived in Srinagar on June 19, 1972 and in order to remove the public resentment he told newsmen at the Srinagar airport, "any settlement on Kashmir will be done in accordance

with the free opinion of the people and no decision will be thrust on them. During my talks with Mrs. Gandhi it has been agreed to start a new chapter in the Centre-State relations after forgetting the past misgivings. And an attempt will be made to remove the misunderstandings and work out an honourable solution." It may be recalled that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah used the expression of "misunderstanding between Kashmir and New Delhi" for the first time. Prior to this, his stand was clear that he would believe that India had forcibly occupied Kashmir and "our dispute with India was on this very issue and any decision will be subjected to the acceptance of the people. And if in future Pakistan ceased to be in existence still our issue will be alive." Next day he announced at a public meeting at Hazuribagh, "I shall fight to the last for the genuine right of place of honour and dignity for the people of Kashmir. We will not bargain on the basic issues. We have decided to change our destiny or will die. I am a muslim and I have entrusted all this to God. If India wants to do something it has to go back to 1947 position still the matter will not end there. One part of our territory is cut off from us and the right route of our trade is blocked. Mrs. Gandhi wants durable peace in the sub-continent and in this connection she as well as I have to talk to Pakistan so that everything could be settled on strong basis. Some people here raise slogans that Pakistan is a party to the dispute, I do not know to whom Pakistan has given the letter of authority for being her well wisher and supporter. If Pakistan has power, she can make one to agree on her position. I want to tell you not to look towards China or Pakistan for your freedom, this country is our's and we alone can make decisions on it."

On June 28, 1972 a summit conference between India and Pakistan began in Simla where the Simla Agreement was evolved after Mrs. Gandhi-Bhutto talks. Under the agreement Pakistan was able to make India agree that she was also a party to the Kashmir dispute. A six-point agreement between the two sides was reached under which it was agreed that India and Pakistan will find a permanent solution to the Kashmir dispute through bilateral talks and negotiations instead of using force. This agreement evoked anger among a section of the extremists who staged a black flag demonstration against Mrs. Gandhi on her return to New Delhi from Simla. The Simla Agreement evoked mixed reaction among the people of Kashmir. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah expressed his reaction to the Simla Agreement at a Public meeting at Sopore on July 4, 1972 where he said, "Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Bhutto had no moral and legal right to decide the fate of Kashmir without ascertaining the wishes of the people of Kashmir. People here have been fighting for the right of self-determination for the last 40 years and this cannot be ignored." He added, "When recently the Indian leaders asked me why the Muslims in Kashmir were against India, I had cleared to them that it is so because you had refused to support Kashmiri people's demand for right of self-determination. And people's confidence has been shattered by unilateral repetition of irrevocable accession. Pakistan and China had won the hearts of the people of Kashmir by supporting this right of self-determination and if India too wants to win over the people it should also support their demand." On July 8, 1972 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah sent a communication to Mrs. Gandhi wherein he wanted inclusion of Kashmir leaders in the talks between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute.

On July 15, 1972 the former Prime Minister of Kashmir, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, passed away. On his death Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah instructed his supporters not to join the funeral procession and he himself did not attend the last rites.

In the meanwhile the State Government announced to hold civic elections in the Valley in September and both the Plebiscite Front and the Awami Action Committee, headed by Moulvi Farooq, announced to participate in these elections. In this connection the Plebiscite Front and the Awami Action Committee entered into an alliance and put jointly its candidates on 28 seats. Other candidates who had entered the election arena were forced to withdraw from the contest. And as per the usual practice all those candidates who were nominated by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Moulvi Farooq jointly were elected unopposed.

On November 11, 1972 the Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim hosted 'At Home' in connection with Id-ul-Fitr, and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mr. Beg too were invited to it. It was for the first time that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mr. Beg had attended an official function since 1953. On November 13, 1972 the Sheikh left for New Delhi to have talks with Mr. Gandhi and other leaders. Side by side Beg-Parthasarthy talks too continued and these had virtually become a matter of joke in the eyes of the people. People, in fact, started getting sceptical about these talks. After about a fortnight's stay in New Delhi Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah returned to Srinagar which was followed by summoning of the Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim to New Delhi where he was briefed about talks with the Sheikh. After a month the Sheikh went to Delhi again on December

30, 1972 to have another round of talks with the Central leaders and in between he would continue to assure people in the Valley that he was not bargaining with the Centre and whenever "anything was settled with New Delhi, it will be first placed before the public and nothing will be decided behind the back of the people of Kashmir." As the Beg-Parthasarthy talks were on, the Government of India lifted the ban on the Plebiscite Front on January 11, 1973 and on the heels of it the General Secretary, of the party Mr. G.M. Shah, who is the son-in-law of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah mysteriously resigned from this post and it was remoured that he was joining the Congress to join as a Minister in the State Cabinet. On January 18, 1973, when it was Id-ul-Zuha, there were demonstrations against Mirza Afzal Beg and Moulvi Farooq at Islamabad and in Srinagar. When Mr. Beg wanted to address the Id congregation at Islamabad, people raised slogans against him and he left the premises without making a speech. The same happened in Jama Masjid in Srinagar where demonstration was held against Moulvi Farooq. After his talks with the Indian leaders Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah told PTI, in an interview on January 24, 1973 "Now I do not challenge the reality of Kashmir's accession to India but Kashmir's relations with the Centre should be in accordance with the document of accession of 1947 and Article 370. "This evoked sharp restlessness in the Valley and when there was law and order problem the Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim, came to Srinagar where he directed the authorities to put down any agitation with a heavy hand. People continued to blame the Plebiscite Front for having deviated from the basic ideal but the Party President, Mirza Afzal Beg, told a public meeting at Pulwama on January 30, 1973 "In view of some surmounting diffi-

culties on one front of the battle-field, we have shifted our war to another direction. This, is no way, means that we have accepted our defeat but we have simply changed our tactics. "On seeing that opposition was increasing Mr. Beg convened a public meeting at the Mujahid Manzil, on February 1, 1973 where he said, "we have no ambition and desire for getting power and the opportunist element is levelling false charges against us." A section of the Plebiscite Front demanded resignation of Mr. Beg from the leadership of the Front but this demand did not catch up like a movement. However, a section led by Hakim Javad announced that it was filing a writ petition in the court so that Mr. Beg was restricted from violating the constitution of the Front and using its name and funds.

On the other side Pakistan announced that it should be included in the talks between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and New Delhi because she was an important party to the issue. Without her participation there could be no basic settlement of the issue. Supporters of the Plebiscite Front, in the Valley, felt highly dismayed and angered which caused shattering effect on the organisational structure of the Party. In the background of the seriousness of the situation Mr. Beg talked to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who was in New Delhi, on phone and advised him to rush to Srinagar. Mr. D.P. Dhar too was sent by the Indian Government to Kashmir for taking stock of the situation and, during his three-day stay, he met number of people to get acquainted with the real situation. Dr. Karan Singh too arrived in Srinagar to study the situation and when both these leaders returned to New Delhi they briefed the Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, with different and contradictory information.

As the situation was deteriorating Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah returned to Srinagar on April 2, 1973 and, while addressing the Front workers and people in Mujahid Manzil on April 10, assured people that they should not believe the rumours which said that "we are bargaining with the centre," he added, "my 40 years' political life is before you. Throughout my life I have struggled for getting honour and freedom for you. I am now a setting sun and how was it possible that I shall, at this age, bargain for your freedom I was offered Presidentship and Prime Ministership and had I wanted to become President, I would have become President of Pakistan and I was already the Prime Minister here. We are determined that people of Kashmir alone could decide their own fate and nobody else." But on the other hand Beg-Parthasarthy talks continued against which people's volcanic anger was simmering. Thus on May 21, 1973 the volcano erupted when people started agitation on the pretext of some objectionable words contained in the "Book of Knowledge." The agitation over the book spread all over the Valley though the book had been published about 100 year's age, in 1888, by an English author. It was held that the book was available in some library in Kashmir, but the real motive behind the agitation was to express the anger regarding the change in the outlook of the front leaders and the episode of the "Book of Knowledge" was a mere pretext. In Srinagar the agitation took a violent turn and the police opened fire in which three persons were killed and several others injured. This agitation was curbed by the Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim, in cooperation with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Moulvi Farooq. Large number of people were arrested and others were won over by the Government through the temptation of employment. Those who were killed

or injured were heavily compensated. Despite this feelings of the people remained adamant and over 300 students and youth had been arrested. For curbing this massive agitation Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mirza Afzal Beg cooperated with the authorities in order to make the centre feel that they alone could control any anti-India movement in Kashmir. On July 13, 1973 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah expressed his grief at a public congregation, at Martyr's Graveyard, over growing people's suspicion against him. He assured the people, in clear terms, that he would not make any decision without consulting them and no settlement will be made behind their back. And no decision will be thrust on the people which was against their wishes. This, however, did not satisfy the people and their restlessness continued. On July 19, 1973 a public meeting was organised at Mujahid Manzil for paying tributes to a freedom fighter, Khwaja Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, who had passed away in Pakistan. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, on this occasion, expressed his grievances and said, "People are under the wrong impression that we have deviated from our basic path, but I want to clarify it once again that only people of Kashmir will decide the fate of Kashmir. It is their right to decide whether they wish to join Pakistan or India or remain independent. This land is not free and if it continues to be so, even after my death, my remains should be thrown in the tides of the Arabian sea because I do not want to be buried in slave land".

On August 1, 1973 Syed Mir Qasim was summoned to Delhi by Mrs. Gandhi for talks on the political situation of Kashmir. On his return Mr. Qasim told me that he had suggested to the centre to speed up a settlement with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah whose political

position was on the wane in Kashmir. After a brief discussion with Mr. Qasim, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to New Delhi where he had detailed discussion with Mrs. Gandhi. In Delhi he also attended the session of the Muslim Majlis Mushawarat, in which he advised the muslims in India not to think of remaining outside the national mainstream. After this he came back to Srinagar but a week later he again left for New Delhi to continue his talks with Mrs. Gandhi. During this time a Pakistani delegation, headed by Mr. Aziz Ahmed, arrived in Delhi to have talks with the Indian officials regarding the remaining points agreed upon in Simla Agreement. Mr. Aziz Ahmed sent a message to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in which he expressed his desire to meet him but the Sheikh declined to meet him. However, two crossed each other in the Prime Minister's Secretariat and here Mr. Aziz Ahmed deliberately remarked "Sheikh Sahib, you look quite young these days."

After one month of Mrs. Gandhi-Sheikh parleys, Mrs. Gandhi came to Kashmir on September 26, 1973 and stayed at Pahalgam. Next day Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to Pahalgam where he had a two-hour meeting with Mrs. Gandhi in which he assured her that he was ready for cooperation with New Delhi. Later the Sheikh had a meeting with Syed Mir Qasim at Pahalgam who also met Mrs. Gandhi. On September 28, 1973 the Governor, Mr. L.K. Jha, hosted a luncheon in honour of the Prime Minister in the Raj Bhawan and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was also invited. Mrs. Gandhi was invited by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to his residence on dinner to which the Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim, and the Governor were also invited. And Mrs. Gandhi continued her talks with the Sheikh

over his offer of cooperation at the above said luncheon and dinner. On September 29, 1973 the talks continued but on the next day Mrs. Gandhi did not mention anything about these negotiations at her Press Conference. And the newsmen's questions relating to these talks were totally avoided. But she told newsmen in New Delhi that she was adopting great caution in having any agreement with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and nothing will be done against the national interest of India.

In the meantime Syed Mir Qasim's Government decided to change the name of Government College for Women to Nehru Memorial College and the function to celebrate this was to be presided over by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on the evening of November 7, 1973. But on the morning of the same day an agitation was launched against changing the name of the College and this violent agitation spread to other parts of the Valley. At Sopore and Islamabad during the agitation several buses were set on fire and the police was stoned and this disrupted peace and law and order in the Valley. The Government was compelled not to change the name of the College. The function in this connection which was to be presided over by the Sheikh was not held. Two days later Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah left for Jammu though the agitation was on. The agitation took a serious turn when on November 10, 1973 students of all Colleges came out on the roads and held a powerful demonstration against the leaders of the Plebiscite Front. On the next day Mirza Afzal Beg issued a Press statement in which he said, "Kashmir's accession depended on plebiscite and those people who are creating mis-understandings about us on this issue are enemies of the public." The police arrested

about 400 students and youth during this violent agitation and by using maximum force the Government curbed the agitation. From Jammu Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to New Delhi where he told the Indian Government authorities that the situation in Kashmir was deteriorating speedily and it needed timely and proper solution. On November 22, 1973, a meeting of Plebiscite Front workers was held in Mujahid Manzil to take stock of the situation created by the continuing agitation. In the meeting Mirza Afzal Beg announced that he treated Kashmir as a disputed territory.

On November 25, 1973 the Russian President, Mr. Breznev, arrived in New Delhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was one among those who had gone to the Palam Airport to receive him. The Sheikh was also invited to the dinner hosted by the Indian Premier in honour of the visiting Soviet President and here Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was introduced to Mr. Breznev. Next day the Sheikh went to meet the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Gromyko who had accompanied the President, and was with him for 10 minutes only. On November 28, 1973 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah returned to Srinagar and when I met him at the airport he looked crestfallen and confused. Two days later he addressed a Friday congregation at the Hazratbal Shrine where he said, "a mis-understanding is being created here against us, it is a conspiracy. I have given my life to my people. The man who has struggled all his life for your freedom how can he act insincerely in relation to your objectives and interest. I want to make it clear that Mr. Bhutto should take the responsibility of solving his own problems instead of poking his nose in our matters. Why should he, we do

not know, make an appeal for hartal¹ because, in the end, we have to bear the results of it." The Sheikh also criticised the statement of Mr. Bhutto in which he had said that if the UN resolution had become old, a solution to the Kashmir issue could be got through talks. He said that these UN resolutions had accepted the basic rights of the people of Kashmir and these could not be thrown in the waste paper basket. He expressed deep unhappiness over Mr. Bhutto's appeal in which he had asked people of Kashmir to observe protest hartal against any unilateral agreement between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and New Delhi. Next day he announced at a rally of party workers in Mujahid Manzil that the only base for his talks with New Delhi was the restoration of 1947 position. The talks can progress only on this condition. Later he toured various parts of the Valley where he expressed the same views. He again visited Delhi where his talks continued and returned to Srinagar on January 4, 1974 to celebrate Id-ul-Zuha. On January 7, 1974 he told me, in an interview, "my talks with New Delhi are in progress and I hope that shortly we will be able to reach some results." When I drew his attention towards public resentment against these talks, he commented by saying "these are the activities of the vested interest." After this he remained in New Delhi for about two and a half months and on March 22, 1974 he arrived in

1. It may be recalled that concern was being expressed in Pakistan over the possibility of an agreement between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the Indian Government. Mr. Bhutto had announced at a public meeting that "Pakistan will not accept any unilateral agreement between New Delhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. If there was any such agreement, I would appeal to the people of Kashmir to organise a day's protest hartal."

Jammu where he had talks with various political leaders. The Sheikh returned to Srinagar on March 28, 1974. During his absence a tide of opposition had risen and while addressing a Friday congregation at Hazratbal he said, "during last two and a half months various rumours and stories against me are being circulated here but people should not believe these stories. I assure you, here at this holy place, that I have never bargained your interests and not left you and I shall remain firm on my determination in future too. I shall stand by the promise, I have given to you, till I am alive. My 42 year's political life is before you. In normalising the relations between India and Pakistan and in some settlement lies our interest. New Delhi had suggested to me to change the name of the Plebiscite Front but I made it clear to them that it will not change the name because plebiscite was its aim. If there was any alternate solution to the Kashmir problem, it should be placed before us for consideration. We shall definitely consider it." His speech had mixed reaction but on the whole people's dismay continued. He then addressed the Front rallies at Tral, on April 1, 1974 and at Mujahid Manzil, on April 4, 1974, where he said, "Restoration of 1947 position could be the basis for talks between me and New Delhi. I have repeatedly assured you that whatever results come out of these talks will be placed before you. You will be competent to take a decision on the results of the talks whether to accept it or to reject it."

Despite these assurances political restlessness in Kashmir continued to be on the increase and the general public had the feeling that the Front had deviated from its aim. On April 11, 1974 there were again protests and demonstrations resulting in the closure of all

colleges and the University. The agitation continued for some days and the Government succeeded in curbing it with a heavy hand. When on April 20, 1974 the Indian Prime Minister came to Srinagar, a protest hartal was observed and processions were taken out denouncing any kind of internal settlement between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and New Delhi.

On April 21, 1974, the Sheikh told a Friday gathering at Ganderbal, "the problem of Kashmir continued to remain hanging and so far it has not been solved, only the people of Kashmir can settle it. I assure you that I shall not bargain and I shall stand on my promises, made to you, to the end." After staying for two days the Indian Prime Minister returned to Delhi after studying the situation in Kashmir. On April 24, 1974 some violent and serious events took place in Srinagar and some parts of the Valley which continued for about four days. After this the Sheikh Announced at a public rally at Badgam, "we have made it clear to India, during the talks, that only that solution will be acceptable to us which is based on the people's right of self-determination and in which there is guarantee about security of the rights of the people. We shall continue our efforts for finding out an honourable and permanent solution to the Kashmir issue." On May 20, 1974 Mrs. Gandhi, along with the External Affairs Minister, Sardar Swaran Singh, and the Senegal President, again arrived in Srinagar. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah attended the dinner hosted by the State Government in honour of the Prime Minister and the Senegal President. This was for the first time when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was seen close to the Indian authorities in Srinagar. The Sheikh had two rounds of detailed discussion with Sardar Swaran Singh

in Srinagar. His talks with Indian leaders, about which Pakistan received reports, brought forth a communication from Mr. Bhutto to Mrs. Gandhi in which the former had stated that any agreement between her and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah would be unilateral. Any solution on Kashmir without Pakistan's Participation would not prove durable. In her reply to Mr. Bhutto Mrs. Gandhi had contended that the way Mr. Bhutto was holding talks on internal matters with Azad Kashmir leaders, similarly the Government of India was holding talks with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on the internal matters of Kashmir.

On June 5, 1974 Mr. P.N. Dhar, Secretary to the Prime Minister, arrived in Srinagar and held discussions with various political leaders, including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, on political matters. My meeting with Mr. Dhar took place in the Raj Bhawan and he indicated to me that some political changes in Kashmir were expected very shortly and the Sheikh had assured New Delhi of his cooperation. The External Affairs Minister, Sardar Swaran Singh, came again and hold talks with the Governor, the Chief Minister and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. After his two days detailed discussions Sardar Swaran Singh told newsmen at Chashmashahi Guest House, "I have come to the conclusion, after the talks, that since there was unanimity of approach between us and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on the basic issues, there could be an experiment on some purposeful cooperation. And New Delhi will welcome if a foundation of this cooperation was laid." He also disclosed that Beg-Parthasarthy talks were on and there was hope of seeing matters settled. Sardar Swaran Singh said this much in Srinagar but on his return to New Delhi, on June 13, 1974, he told

Newsmen there that the basis for a settlement with Sheikh Mohammad Abduliah has been reached and that details of the agreement will be finalised within a couple of months. Commenting on Mr. Swaran Singh's statement Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah told me, in an interview, at his residence, "my talks with Sardar Swaran Singh were held in cordial and congenial atmosphere. I have expressed my outlook elaborately and when there will be some settlement straightway it will be placed before the people. People should have this faith that as I have not done anything against their interests and behind their back in the past I shall do the same in future also." On June 14, 1974 the State Cabinet met for five hours in Srinagar and the Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim, briefed his colleagues on the situation. That very evening he told me at his residence, "the basis for agreement has been finalised : only the matter related to its implementation has to be settled." On June 15, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, told foreign correspondents, during questions at a much hosted by them in New Delhi "I want to make it clear that Kashmir's accession to India is beyond any doubt and no talks are being held with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on this issue. Instead talks are underway with him on internal matters." On June 17, 1974 the Sheikh, while commenting on it, told a public gathering at Badgam, "justice demands that the genuine rights of the people of Kashmir be accepted. We want such a settlement which would have the support of the people of Kashmir and even the people of Azad Kashmir."

Five days later, on June 22, 1974, the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, again paid a visit to Kashmir and on June 23, 1974 she invited State Ministers and Congress Office bearers to a dinner where she tried to

make them agree on making Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah the Chief Minister of the State. During the three-hour meeting the Ministers and the party office bearers assured the Prime Minister of their cooperation. Next Day when Syed Mir Qasim hosted a dinner in honour of Mrs. Gandhi, she was received both by him and the Sheikh on her arrival to the party. Mrs. Gandhi also had consultations with the Army Commanders, stationed in Kashmir. After these negotiations the State Government released all those persons arrested in connection with the "Al Fatah" case. When Mrs. Gandhi returned to New Delhi Mr. G. Parthasarthy came to Srinagar for continuing his dialogue.

16

KASHMIR ACCORD

On July 6, 1974 the Plebiscite Front held its annual session where the Front leaders reiterated their desire to have solution to Kashmir's basic problem. After the annual session a big public meeting was held in Lal Chowk, on July 8, 1974, where Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah announced, "I have repeatedly given the assurance to you that whenever any settlement was finalised with New Delhi, it would be placed before the people and it is only your right either to accept or reject it. It is all right if the solution is acceptable to you otherwise some other solution will be found out. The people of Azad Kashmir too will be consulted in this connection. It is also to be seen that the interests of Pakistan are not affected because that very solution can be durable which has the support of the entire sub-continent." But this did not reduce the restlessness among the people.

Taking advantage of this public dissatisfaction, after the Front's annual session, the Awami Action Committee Chief Moulvi Farooq, decided to organise a protest day against the talks between New Delhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on July 12, 1974. On this day a surge and a mass of people, from the urban and rural areas, came out on the streets and it was one of the biggest and historic public demonstration in Srinagar. And despite pressure and beating from the

authorities the mass of people reached Lal Chowk from Jama Masjid but here the Government did not permit it to hold a public meeting where five days ago a meeting was addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. This bred anger and anxiety among the people in Srinagar and other parts of the Valley and law and order got disrupted.

On the other hand Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, told a press conference that Pakistan would not be bound by any unilateral agreement between New Delhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on Kashmir. And this sort of settlement will have no impact on the Kashmir dispute. Commenting on this statement Mr. Beg, who was in New Delhi in connection with the negotiations, announced that Pakistan too will be consulted on any agreement on Kashmir. This statement of Mr. Beg was widely publicised in Srinagar newspapers. While sensing public resentment Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah convened a public meeting in Lal Chowk where, while affirming the right of people to settle the Kashmir dispute, announced, "I have decided that nothing will be decided against the will and wishes of the people of Kashmir. It will not be allowed. I again want to make it clear that whatever result comes out of my talks with New Delhi will be placed before the people of Kashmir and they will be competent to accept or reject it".

A report was presented to the Prime Minister in which it was mentioned that Beg-Parthasarthy talks were progressing well. Syed Mir Qasim was summoned to New Delhi and Mr. Beg also flew to New Delhi on July 22, 1974 where he had further talks with the Prime Minister and Mr. Parthasarthy. After this, one Union

Minister, Mr. D.K. Baroah, came to Srinagar on September 12, 1974 to lay the foundation stone of the Sher-i-Kashmir Medical Institute at Soura. The foundation laying ceremony was attended by the Chief Minister, Government officials and Congress leaders. When the Sheikh, while welcoming Mr. Baroah raised the slogan "D.K. Baroah zindabad" there was pindrop silence in the function. Mr. Baroah had talks with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah at a dinner, hosted by the Sheikh in his honour at Broadway Hotel and later the Kashmir leader left for New Delhi again where he had detailed talks with the Prime Minister and Mr. Parthasarthy. Mr. Beg also joined these talks. After these talks Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said at a press conference in New Delhi, on September 18, 1974, "my agreement with New Delhi is out of question so long the State Assembly was not dissolved and fresh elections were not held. In my talks I have laid stress on restoration of atleast the 1953 position." After five days' stay both Mr. Beg and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah returned to Srinagar.

In the first week of October 1974 there were again violent demonstrations in Kashmir in which students and youth fought with the police. The youth and students took out number of processions in which a demand for Plebiscite was made and the Front leaders were accused of having deviated from the basic aim. They also protested against Sheikh-Indira talks. While addressing an Id congregation at Idgah, on October 20, 1974. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah dramatically announced, "if restoration of 1953 position was acceptable to New Delhi, we can assume power." He also added that talks on Kashmir with the Indian Government were on and results of these talks would be placed, first of

all, before the people of Kashmir who were competent to accept or turn it down." In the meantime Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had talks with Syed Mir Qasim and kept on shuttling between Srinagar and New Delhi with the aim of speeding up the process of negotiations. On October 28, 1974 he came back to Srinagar in the same plane in which Mrs. Gandhi arrived in Kashmir. She went to Ladakh along with Syed Mir Qasim. She had two and a half hours meeting with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on her return from Ladakh at a dinner party at the residence of Mr. Qasim who also participated in the talks. On November 1, 1974 Mrs. Gandhi returned to New Delhi and next day Mr. G. Parthasarthy arrived in Srinagar again to have talks with Mr. Beg and the Sheikh. After these talks the Sheikh said at a public meeting in Lal Chowk, "if India wants to settle the Kashmir issue through talks, it is good but if it wants to procrastinate, it will lose its last opportunity for which it will have to repent. If the talks fail, it will create a revolution here. Rest assure we cannot give up the objectives of 1931." While Mr. Beg left for New Delhi to continue his talks with Mr. Parthasarthy, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah assured people, at a public meeting at Kupwara, 55 miles from Srinagar, on November 13, 1974 that attempts to find a real solution to the Kashmir issue were on and in this connection negotiations with New Delhi continued. "If the talks yielded an honourable solution, it will be placed before the people because it is the right of the people to accept or reject it. It will be then carried to Pakistan so that there could be a lasting solution to the issue because India's and Pakistan's willingness and support are necessary".

This was followed by an announcement by Mirza

Afzal Beg, in New Delhi on November 14, 1974, that an agreement has been reached between the Plebiscite Front leader and New Delhi. Announcing this at a press conference he said, "Mrs. Gandhi and Sheikh Sahib have been informed of the conclusions we have arrived at after the talks between me and Parthasarthy." And prior to Mr. Beg's return to Srinagar on November 17, 1974, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, in order to mitigate people's anger and dismay, said at Charar-i-Sharief on November 15, 1974, a day later Mr. Beg's announcement, "the matter cannot end with an honourable settlement with India but we will now hold talks with the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto. It is so because so long Pakistan does not participate, there can be no final solution to the Kashmir Issue." The announcement of agreement evoked sharp reaction and concern in Pakistan and Mr. Bhutto announced at a press conference on November 27, 1974. "India has agreed under the Simla agreement, to have bilateral talks with Pakistan on Kashmir. If, despite this agreement, there is any unilateral step, which is against the spirit of the Simla agreement, Pakistan will not accept that." The Government of India, announced in Parliament on December 13, 1974, that negotiations between India and Pakistan over Kashmir will begin shortly. The Indian Minister for External Affairs said in Parliament that talks with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was an internal matter of India and Pakistan needed not to interfere in it. Later on December 27, 1974 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah told a dismayed Id congregation in Srinagar, "my talks with New Delhi are on and nobody should construe that the aim of these talks is to seek power because I have no desire for power. But attempts are afoot to find some solution to the Kashmir problem. I want to repeat that only that solution to the issue will be permanent

which has the approval of all the three concerned parties, people of Kashmir, Pakistan and India. I have promised you that I shall place the results of the talks before you and it is your job to turn it down or accept it."

On January 3, 1975 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah left for Jammu where he had two rounds of talks with the State Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim, and after these talks Mr. Qasim informed one of his colleagues, "whatever has been decided between Sheikh Abdullah and New Delhi, on that basis the Sheikh will occupy my chair. The Congress legislature party will elect him as the Chief Minister. And he will assume the office in the capacity of a Congress Party leader." On this, some supporters of Mr. Qasim expressed doubts but Mr. Qasim explained to them that the real power would remain in the hands of the Congress Party. He also advised them not to feel panicky and had not been this done the Sheikh could have not waited for long. The Sheikh had already told him that he would go back to the old position of demanding Plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir if settled matters were not implemented immediately.

After talks in Jammu both Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Syed Mir Qasim went to New Delhi, the former by air and the latter by train, where Mr. Qasim acquainted the Prime Minister of the latest situation. Next day, January 7, 1975, I contacted Mr. Qasim on telephone who was in New Delhi and he told me, "all matters have been settled and Sheikh Abdullah has agreed to become leader of the Congress Legislature party. The remaining matters pertaining to the constitutional, administrative and political aspects will remain

undisturbed." On my insistence Mr. Qasim informed me that if Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah finally agreed on it, he will be the Chief Minister in his place and the Congress party would continue to be the party in power. In Delhi Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had meetings with Mr. G. Parthasarthy and Mr. D.P. Dhar and during this time besides Mr. Beg, the Governor and the Chief Secretary of the State were also summoned to New Delhi. The talks continued for one week and later, on January 18, 1975, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah along with Syed Mir Qasim returned to Jammu where they were together received as per the official protocol. The Sheikh had talks with the Congress legislators and assured them that even after becoming the Chief Minister he would act as their elected leader. Syed Mir Qasim and Mr. D.P. Dhar too joined these talks. After seeking confidence in Jammu Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went back to Delhi where he informed the Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, about the results of his talks in Jammu, Mrs. Gandhi, in return, assured him that he would be elected Chief Minister shortly.

The agreement between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and New Delhi had sharp reactions in Pakistan and the Prime Minister, Mr. Bhutto in an announcement, said he would make an appeal to people of Pakistan and Kashmir to hold a public demonstration against the agreement to mark their disapproval. He announced that he would fix the date for the hartal later. After everything was settled Mrs. Gandhi summoned Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and other Congress leaders to New Delhi and it was decided that Syed Mir Qasim will step down in favour of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who will be duly elected as leader by the Congress Legislature party. When Syed Mir

Qasim informed Mr. Beg about it, the latter told a press conference in New Delhi that a final agreement has been reached between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and New Delhi, and a sound foundation of durable centre-State relations had been laid. He added, "I shall go back to Kashmir and discuss with our supporters the need for changing the name, aims and objectives of our party and I hope the matter will be settled amicably."

After a settlement with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mr. D.P. Dhar was again posted as India's ambassador to the Soviet Union. He remained as Union Minister for Planning for two years during which he solved some internal and external plane. On February 11, 1975 Mirza Afzal Beg returned to Srinagar and held a meeting of the Plebiscite Front where he said, "the people will be informed about the results of the talks at the appropriate time. There has been an agreement with New Delhi and this agreement has been as per my statement of February 5, 1972, in which I had stated that changes in the situation in the sub-continent had forced us to adopt a realistic attitude. We are well wishers of Pakistan, we want her to prosper but people of Kashmir want to solve their problems themselves. Unfortunately there is unfavourable atmosphere in the Valley and it is the creation of those who have become unhappy over the agreement." He later left for New Delhi.

As per the programme a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party was held in Jammu on February 22, 1975 in which Syed Mir Qasim submitted his resignation and appealed to the members to elect Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as Chief Minister in his place. On February 23, 1975 the Sheikh left New Delhi for

Jammu by train and next day the Prime Minister informed the Parliament that the "agreement with Sheikh Abdullah was within the framework of the Indian Constitution and the relations between the Centre and Jammu and Kashmir will be according to the Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Even any amendment to the State Constitution cannot be done without the approval of the President of India. We have not accepted the suggestion of Kashmir leaders for limiting the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to Jammu and Kashmir. Nothing has been decided about changing the nomenclature of the Chief Minister and the Governor to the Prime Minister and the Sadar-i-Riyasat respectively. We have not also agreed to the Sheikh Abdullah's suggestion for the restoration of 1953 constitutional position in the State. About promulgating President's rule in the State Sheikh Abdullah has suggested that the State Government should be first consulted on it but we have not accepted this also. Article 370 of the Indian Constitution is a permanent article and continues to be part of the Constitution since 1953." This announcement was reacted sharply by people in Kashmir who held demonstrations in the city where slogans like "Sheikh-Indira Samjota Murdabad" (down with Sheikh-Indira Agreement) were raised. On the morning of February 25, 1975 Syed Mir Qasim appeared to be sullen because he was told by M.P. Mr. Shamim Ahmad Shamim, that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had been pained by the statement of Mrs. Gandhi in the Parliament. The Sheikh had told Shamim that he was not prepared now to assume power as Chief Minister. But according to Syed Mir Qasim when he went to the residence of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah he found him ready to go with him. He had put on a beautiful suit, for taking over as Chief Minister. At that time he did

not even mention anything about Mrs. Gandhi's statement in Parliament.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah came to the meeting of the Congress legislature party and he was elected leader of the party unanimously. The Sheikh formed his Cabinet in which he included, besides Mr. Afzal Beg, two Government officials Mr. Devi Das Thakur and Mr. Sonam Narboo. Mr. Narboo who was an engineer in the Public Works Department in the State and was later appointed Ambassador of India in Mangolia. All this was done behind the back of the people and they were not consulted at all. But the Plebiscite Front workers were jubilant because they felt they had secured power.

After taking the oath as the Chief Minister, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah told newsmen, in reply to questions, "the present arrangement is completely an interim arrangement. Fresh elections to the State Assembly will be held within next two to three months so that a Government, duly elected by people, is installed in the State".

After the Sheikh took over as Chief Minister the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, appealed to the people of Kashmir to observe hartal, on February 28, 1975, in protest against the agreement between the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. And on this day complete hartal was observed not only in Srinagar but in other parts of the Valley and an atmosphere of panick and fear was generated. Two days after the hartal the new Chief Minister, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah arrived in Srinagar, on March 2, 1975, and he was received warmly

by the Front Workers and Government Officials. While addressing a big public meeting in Lal Chowk he introduced the members of his cabinet by saying, "when I took over as the Chief Minister I could not see any honest person in the State and, therefore, I requested Mr. Devi Dar Thakur, who was Judge of the High Court, to join the Ministry after resigning from his post. Mr. Thakur obliged me by resigning and joined the Cabinet. I brought Sonam Narboo from Mangolia where he was posted as India's Ambassador. I could do it through Mrs. Gandhi and this way "Mangolia's sparrow" has joined my Cabinet. "After introducing Mr. Beg Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said that his eyes were searching for only honest people. I could find only these three persons honest and they have been included in the Cabinet."

KASHMIR ACCORD...DOCUMENTS

On 13 November 1947, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and Mr. G. Parthasarathi signed the "Kashmir Accord" document at New Delhi. The issues on which agreement was reached at between the parties are as under :—

1. The state of Jammu and Kashmir, which is a constituent unit of the Union of India, shall, in its relations with the Union, continue to be governed by Article 370 of Constitution of India.

2. The residuary powers of legislation shall remain with the State ; however, Parliament will continue to have power to make laws relating to the prevention of activities directed towards disclaiming, questioning or disrupting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of

India or bringing about cession of a part of the territory of India or secession of a part of the territory of India from the Union or causing insult to the Indian National Flag, the Indian National Anthem and the Constitution.

3. Where any provision of the Constitution of India had been applied to the State of Jammu and Kashmir with adaptations and modifications, such adaptations and modifications can be altered or repealed by an order of the President under Article 370, each individual proposal in this behalf being considered on its merits; but provisions of the Constitution of India already applied to the State of Jammu and Kashmir without adaptation or modification are unalterable.

4. With a view to assuring freedom to the State of Jammu and Kashmir to have its own legislation on matters like welfare measures, cultural matters, social security, personal law, and procedural laws, in a manner suited to the special conditions in the State, it is agreed that the State Government can review the laws made by Parliament or extended to the State after 1953 on any matter relatable to the Concurrent List and may decide which of them, in its opinion, needs amendment or repeal. Thereafter, appropriate steps may be taken under Article 254 of the Constitution of India. The grant of President's assent to such legislation would be sympathetically considered. The same approach would be adopted in regard to laws to be made by Parliament in future under the Proviso to clause 2 of that Article. The State Government shall be consulted regarding the application of any such law to the State and the views of the State Government shall receive the fullest consideration.

5. As an arrangement reciprocal to what has been provided under Article 368, a suitable modification of that Article as applied to the State should be made by Presidential Order to the effect that no law made by the Legislature of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, seeking to make any change in or in the effect of any provision of the Constitution of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, seeking to make any change in or in the effect of any provision of the Constitution of the State of Jammu and Kashmir relating to any of the undermentioned matters, shall take effect unless the Bill, having been reserved for the consideration of the President, receives his assent; the matters are :—

- (a) the appointment, powers, functions, duties, privileges and immunities of the Governor; and
- (b) the following matters relating to Election, namely, the superintendence, direction and control of Elections by the Election Commission of India, eligibility for inclusion in the electoral rolls without discrimination, adult suffrage and composition of the Legislative Council, being matters specified in section 138, 139, 140 and 50 of the Constitution of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

6. No agreement was possible on the question of nomenclature of the Governor and the Chief Minister and the matter is therefore remitted to the principals.

(Sd) Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg

(Sd) G. Parthasarthi

After signing the documents, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg wrote the acknowledgement letter to Mr. G. Parthasarathi on the same day, 13 November, 1974.

Camp New Delhi,
November 13, 1974.

Dear Shri Parthasarathy,

I have today signed the document containing the points on which we have reached agreement.

2. As you may recall, in the course of discussions we had on the various issues, I made proposals regarding the following matters :—

- (i) The provisions relating to the fundamental rights to be incorporated in the State Constitution.
- (ii) The superintendence, direction and control over elections to the State Legislature by the Election Commission should be removed.
- (iii) Article 356 should be modified to require the consent of the State before an order is issued thereunder, or some similar safeguard should be provided.

After prolonged discussions you did not agree to these proposals.

Kindly acknowledge receipt.

Yours Sincerely,
(Sd) Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg

Shri G. Parthasarathi,
31, Aurangzeb Road,
New Delhi.

After this on 29 December, 1974 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah wrote the following letter to the Prime Minister from Srinagar.

10, Maulana Azad Road,
Srinagar (Kashmir)
29-12-1974.

CONFIDENTIAL

My dear Indiraji,

I have received your letter of 16th December, 1974 marked 'Confidential'.

I am sorry to say that your representative should have found it necessary to ask me to write to you about the maintenance of those basic features of the State's Constitution which are necessary not only for uniformity but also to give a measure of confidence to the people regarding the democratic functioning of the Government in the State. It pains me that even after the decades of my sufferings and sacrifices for these very cherished values, I should be called upon to sign an undertaking to stand by them. This attitude clearly shows the lack of trust which continues to exist in the minds of those with whom I may have to deal in the future. I hope you will agree with me that the only way to repair the vast damage done to the Indo-Kashmir relationship by the Arbitrary action of 9th August, 1953 is possible only through complete understanding and mutual trust. If this trust is lacking even in a very small measure, all our efforts to reach an understanding will prove fruitless.

Ordinarily, the broad principles of the partition of the subcontinent might well have taken the State to

Pakistan in 1947, but for various reasons, things happened other way. And because of our identity with the basic ideals and fundamental values for which India stood, the Leadership of the National Conference supported the accession of the State to India, on the basis of the Instrument of Accession signed by the Maharaja. But in order to make the Indo-Kashmir relationship durable, means had to be devised to have the support of all the sections of the State's population for the Action of the National Conference Leadership. The minorities within the State, no doubt, felt secure once the Leadership of the National Conference decided to throw its lot with India, and their support was, therefore, assured. But what about the Muslim Majority? The Muslims of the State were simultaneously a minority in relation to all India population and a majority within their own State. Therefore, all fears and apprehension that they would be dominated by all India majority had to be dispelled and they had to be assured that within the State their rights as a majority would be guaranteed. Their fear complex could be dispelled only by ensuring complete internal autonomy of the State as envisaged in the Instrument of Accession signed by the Maharaja. Accordingly, an agreement governing the Centre-State relationship was hammered out by the leaders of the two sides. In evolving this relationship all aspects of the problem and special features of the situation were taken into consideration. The provisions of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution were the result of these efforts

I have no doubt in my mind that the manner in which the Government of India systematically eroded both the letter and spirit of the special provision of the Union Constitution jeopardised the very foundation of the relationship so laboriously built over years of tireless

effort and dedication. I recall with pain and anguish that once a former Home Minister of India publically characterised Article 370 as a 'Tunnel' obviously implying that through it the internal autonomy of Kashmir will be eroded and this exactly was assiduously accomplished behind our back after 9th August, 1953.

Recently, a responsible dignitary of the Government of India was candid enough to tell me that India would not be prepared to throw the minority community of the State, at the mercy of the majority by allowing the fundamental rights to be kept in the State Constitution. I told him that such an attitude of India will completely shatter the trust and confidence of the majority, who, in 1947, put their faith in the declarations of Indian leadership, and gave enough proof, if any was needed, that it was capable of protecting the interests of the minorities, at the most crucial moments even at the cost of its own life. He had no answer.

Myself and the Plebiscite Front Leadership were purposely kept behind the bars or externed from the State at the time of every general election to the State Legislature or the Parliament in the years 1957, 1962, 1967 and 1972. As if this was not enough, large scale rigging in elections was taken recourse to obviously these means were adopted so as to bring into being a legislature and Government in the State of a particular choice and keep effective opposition out of the way, thus facilitating the erosion of Article 370—a process which has been going on for over last two decades.

In spite of this all betrayal and sufferings and tribulations that we had to undergo for years on end, I welcomed your desire, which you expressed in 1972, to

take a fresh look at the Indo-Kashmir relationship. I made it clear to you and to the public at large that my differences with India were not over the issue of the accession of the State but on the quantum of accession. In my opinion accession and autonomy are inter-dependent. I had agreed to throw in my lot with India on the basis of the Instrument of Accession signed by the Maharaja which guaranteed complete internal autonomy to the State. If this autonomy is taken away, then the very foundation of the relationship is destroyed. I, therefore, pleaded the view that in case you wished me to help in rebuilding the faith and confidence that the majority community in the State has lost in India, I can only start from the point where I left off in August, 1953. For me to take even this position is not going to be without difficulties, and I shall be faced with many a doubting mind. But I would nevertheless give it a try.

You have written in your letter that matters on which our two representatives have disagreed are basic issues and that nothing will be gained by discussing these matters again between ourselves since they have already been thoroughly discussed. If there is no agreement on these basic issues, then what would be the use of discussing issues that are not basic? We consider the matters on which agreement has not been reached equally vital and basic for us and, unless there is agreement on them, I do not think that any useful purpose would be served by prolonging our discussions.

Begum Sahiba sends here respectful regards, I hope you are doing well.

With regards,

Yours Sincerely,

(Sd) Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah

Shrimati Indira Gandhi,
Prime Minister of India,
New Delhi.

Despatched by hand through Nisar Ahmad on
30th December, 1974.

(Sd) S.M.A.

When Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah did not receive a reply of the above mentioned letter, he left for Jammu where he met Chief Minister Syed Mir Qasim. After the meeting both of them went to Delhi where, on February 9, 1975, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had a prolonged discussion with Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi and later wrote her the following letter :

3, Kotla Lane,
New Delhi,
11-2-1975.

CONFIDENTIAL

My dear Prime Minister,

I have seen the text of the conclusions reached between Shri G. Parthasarathi and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg on the various Constitutional issues concerning the Centre-State relationship between the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union of India. I have studied the document and have also had discussion with you. As you are aware, it is my view that constitutional relationship between the Centre and the State of Jammu

and Kashmir should be what it was in 1953. Nevertheless, I am happy to say that the agreed conclusions provide a good basis for my co-operation at the political level and for Centre-State relationship.

I appreciate that the main purpose of the dialogue was to remove misapprehensions on either side to ensure that the bond between the Union and the State is further strengthened and to afford to the people of the State full scope for undertaking social welfare and developmental measures.

The accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India is not a matter in issue. It has been my firm belief that the future of Jammu and Kashmir lies with India because of the common ideals that we share. I hope you would appreciate that the sole reason for my agreeing to co-operate at the political and Governmental levels is to enable the State Government to initiate measures for the well-being of the people of the State which I have always considered as my sacred trust. It will be my constant endeavour to ensure that the State of Jammu and Kashmir continues to make its contribution to the sovereignty, integrity and progress of the Nation. By the same token, I am sure that the Central Government would co-operate with the State Government fully in respect of measures to be undertaken by the State Government to further the progress and welfare of the people of the State as an integral part of India.

The country is passing through a critical period and it is all the more necessary for all of us who cherish the ideals of democracy, secularism and socialism, to strengthen your hands as the leader of the Nation and

it is in this spirit that I am offering my whole-hearted co-operation.

Yours Sincerely,

(Sd) Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi,
Prime Minister of India,
New Delhi.

In reply to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's letter Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi sent him the following letter on February 12, 1975.

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister,
New Delhi,
February 12, 1975.

Dear Sheikh Sahib,

I am happy to receive your letter expressing your concurrence with the conclusions reached between Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and Shri G. Parthasarathi on certain constitutional aspects of the relationship of the Centre with the State of Jammu and Kashmir and offering your whole-hearted co-operation at the Political and Governmental level to further promote the well-being of the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. I am aware of your views on the Centre-State relationship in respect of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. I have already explained to you that the clock cannot be put back and we have to take note of the realities of the situation. I am appreciative of the spirit in which you have expressed your agreement with the terms of the agreed conclusions.

The agreed conclusions have been examined and I am in a position to inform you that such appropriate executive action as may be necessary to give effect to them will be taken. I have been in close touch with the Chief Minister of the State who is in agreement with the approach in regard to political co-operation with you and the understanding reached about the relationship of the State with the Union.

The Central Government would undoubtedly continue to co-operate with the State Government fully in respect of measures to be undertaken by the State Government to further the progress and welfare of the people of that State, which is of equal concern to the Central Government.

As pointed out by you, the country is passing through a critical period and it is a matter of great satisfaction to me that a person of your stature who made an outstanding contribution during the freedom struggle should come forward again to co-operate in the task of strengthening the nation and sustaining its ideals.

Yours Sincerely,
(Sd) Indira Gandhi.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah,
3, Kotla Lane,
New Delhi.

Only 12 days after writing the aforesaid letter to Mrs. Gandhi, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah arrived at Jammu and took over from Syed Mir Qasim as the new Chief Minister of the State of Jammu and Kashmir on February 25, 1975.

DISCORD

The Plebiscite Front leaders and office bearers gave the impression that for achieving "our ideals and objectives" power was a necessary instrument and means. They would also make one to believe that "we had succeeded in gaining control over the power" and election of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as Chief Minister, with the support of the Congress Legislature Party, was simply a constitutional formality otherwise the Sheikh was the fountain head of all authority. The Front leaders and office bearers succeeded, after creating an impression, in making people adopt "wait and watch" policy instead of taking to any struggle. Two weeks after becoming the Chief Minister the Congress demanded inclusion of their representatives in the Cabinet. They indicated that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had, during talks, agreed that he would, after assuming power as Chief Minister, include representatives of the Congress in the Cabinet. On one side the Congress was demanding its share in the Ministry, on the other the Plebiscite Front Executive held its first meeting in Jammu, on April 4, 1975. This was the first meeting, the Front could hold in that region during last 22 years' of its existence. The meeting adopted a resolution which called for changing the name of the party. When the Congress leaders complained to Mrs. Gandhi about Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's bad

treatment to the Congressmen and his refusal to include partymen, as per the agreement in the Cabinet, she herself came to Jammu on April 14, 1975. During her two-days stay in Jammu she asked Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to include Congressmen in the Cabinet immediately. On the advice of Mrs. Gandhi, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah sent a new list of 10 persons for inclusion in the Ministry: the Chief Minister had proposed names of 10 persons to be appointed as Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers. This list included five persons from the Congress—Bhagat Chajju Ram, Sardar Rangil Singh, Mr. Mangat Ram, Chowdhry Mohammad Shafi and Kachu Mohammad Ali from Kargil—two persons from the Plebiscite Front, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Kochak and Hakim Habib-Ullah and three Non-party-men Mr. G.M. Shah, Mr. Mohan Kishan Tickoo, Retd. Session Judge and Miss Tahira Shehmeri, Principal Government College for Women, Nawakadal, Srinagar. When Congress leaders came to know of this list, they complained to Mrs. Gandhi, on telephone, that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was preferring Government servants on political leaders for inclusion in the Cabinet. Mrs. Gandhi told Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, on phone, to drop Miss Shehmeri and appoint Zenab Begum, sister of former Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Sadiq, as Minister in her place. Miss Shehmeri had been summoned to Jammu for take oath as Minister of the State. The staff of the College had given her a farewell party. The Department of Information had circulated her bio-data, as was done in case of other Ministers, to newspapers. But when she reached Jammu she came to know that her name had been dropped and Zenab Begum was being inducted in the Ministry in her place. The Governor administered the oath to six Congress members, two Front and two Non-party

persons. Despite representation in the Cabinet there appeared to be confrontation between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and those Congress leaders who were not inducted in the Cabinet. For taking stock of the situation Mrs. Gandhi sent Mr. G. Parthasarthy to Srinagar who reported back to the Prime Minister his assessment. After this President, Mr. Fakhur-ud-Din Ali Ahmad, arrived in Srinagar for having talks with Kashmir leaders. Two days after his arrival Mr. Kewal Singh, Foreign Secretary, and Mr. T.N. Kaul too arrived and the Congress President, Mr. D.K. Baruah, followed them on June 12, 1975. The same day Mr. D.P. Dhar, who was well connected with the politics of the State and who was at that time India's ambassador to the Soviet Union, passed away in New Delhi following heart attack. On the same day Mr. Jagmohan Lal Sinha, Judge of the Allahabad High Court delivered the judgment on a writ petition against Mrs. Gandhi's election to the Lok Sabha. The Court held Mrs. Gandhi's election illegal and declared her unseated. Mr. Dhar's dead body was brought from New Delhi to Srinagar for last rites. To mourn his death a function was organised under the chairmanship of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who wept bitterly while paying tributes to Mr. Dhar, though the Sheikh's attitude on the death of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and G.M. Sadiq was quite different. At that time he did not even express grief to the families of the two deceased leaders.

On the night of June 25, 1975 internal emergency was promulgated in India under which Mrs. Gandhi assumed sweeping powers. All opposition leaders, including Jayaprakash Narayan and Morarji Desai, were arrested. Press censorship including other curbs were

placed on newspapers. Jamat-i-Islami and the RSS were banned.

On July 14, 1975 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah became member of the State Legislative Assembly after winning a by-election from the Ganderbal constituency. It had been decided with the Congress party that its candidate, Mr. Maqbool Bhat, will vacate the Ganderbal seat to facilitate Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to get elected to the Assembly. This was necessary because under the constitution a person cannot remain a Minister or Chief Minister if he is not elected to the Assembly within six months. After becoming member of the Assembly and after the promulgation of the emergency the issue of holding fresh assembly elections remained unattended. On a request from the State Government emergency laws were extended to the State of Jammu and Kashmir and with the result Jammu and Kashmir Jamat-i-Islami too was banned, within next two months.

At a workers' convention the Plebiscite Front changed its name into the National Conference.

On August 15, 1975 President of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman and all his associates and colleagues were assassinated in a dramatic coup by the Bangladesh Army. The news of their assassination was heard with interest and attention in Kashmir.

During this time the tussle between the Congress and the National Conference disturbed New Delhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah appealed to Mrs. Gandhi to treat the National Conference as the the wing of Congress in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. But Mrs. Gandhi strongly rejected this suggestion and

summoned Congress leaders to Delhi where she advised them to strengthen the party in Kashmir. In this connection the party was reorganised and Mufti Mohammad Syed was elected President of the Party. When Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah reacted to it the Governor was summoned to Delhi who returned back to Srinagar on October 7, 1975. On October 8, 1975 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, while addressing a public meeting in Lal Chowk, criticised the Congress and accused New Delhi of "playing with our honour". He added "we will not tolerate it". This angered New Delhi further and Mrs. Gandhi herself visited Srinagar on October 9, 1975. Despite the bitter differences Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and National Conference received the Prime Minister warmly. She told a rally of Congress workers in Emporium Gardens in Srinagar, "it is not in the hands of the people of Kashmir to allow or disallow Congress to exist in the State. If all the people of Kashmir want the Congress to wind up its organisation it will not happen. It was the Congress which gave power to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Neither anybody could dislodge Syed Mir Qasim nor we were in need of it but we did not like to see the Kishmiri leaders quarrelling with each other. That is why Syed Mir Qasim offered to quit to enable Kashmir to have durable links with India. He made this sacrifices for the interests of the country. We are proud that the Congress party controlled various difficulties of the State and this party has to serve people in future too". After Mrs. Gandhi's speech was broadcast by the Radio and published in the newspapers there was a sharp and unfavourable reaction in the rank and file of the National Conference. But people felt dismayed when they came to know that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had gone to meet Mrs. Gandhi in the Guest House and had agreed on the

formation of a Committee comprising Syed Mir Qasim, Mr. Om Mehta, Mr. Beg and Mr. Devi Dass Thakur, to sort out problems not only between the Congress and the National Conference but between the Centre and the State. After Mrs. Gandhi's departure from Srinagar, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said on October 19, 1975, at a public meeting, organised by the National Conference, that he did not want to weaken either the Centre or the Congress in the State but he simply wanted to strengthen the National Conference. In this very public meeting at Lal Chowk, he himself became member of the National Conference and later its President. Despite his soft attitude the Congress continued its policy of criticism of the Sheikh and his administration and when there was confrontation, once again, between the two parties, the Chief Minister put up a proposal for holding fresh elections to the State Assembly. But New Delhi rejected this demand side by side he was asked to give more and adequate representation to the Congress in the Council of Ministers so that the party could play an effective role.

In the first week of January 1976 the Congress President Mufti Mohammad Syed, told me, in an interview, "if Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah refused to give us full representation in the Ministry, we will move vote of No-confidence against him in the Assembly". When this news was published, the Sheikh had a meeting with Syed Mir Qasim but the latter assured him that nothing of that sort will be done. But Congressmen started a campaign against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and advised him to work in the bigger field of national politics instead of confining himself to the State politics. In this connection Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah met Mrs. Gandhi in New Delhi for an hour and sought her

assurance that he would not be removed from power and after this assurance he led a cultural troupe and toured various parts of the country. On February 16, 1976 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah suggested in the Assembly Session that there should be a "holiday for politicking for some years" and "we should devote all our attention" for economic development of the State. But the Congress members opposed his suggestion. The Congress itself got divided and group of 10 members, led by Mr. Abdul Gani Lone, a former Education Minister in the Congress Ministry resigned from the party. New Delhi disliked this development and it suspected Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for trying to wean away Congress members from the party. For having direct talks with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Congress leaders Mrs. Gandhi arrived in Jammu on March 27, 1976. During her two day stay she held talks with the Governor and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Congress leaders regarding the relations between the two parties. On this occasion a Congress convention was organised where Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's policies were criticised. However, Mrs. Gandhi advised Congressmen not to take any step against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's Government so long he continued to cooperate with them. The Sheikh was again asked to give representation to leading Congressmen in his Cabinet.

On April 24, 1976 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah convened a convention of the National Conference in Jammu wherein he said that he and his party treated "Naya Kashmir" as their aim which was their object prior to 1947. And since an agreement had been reached with New Delhi, therefore, State's development was the Party's only aim. A resolution was adopted in the

convention which said that with the agreement between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mrs. Gandhi the political issue of Kashmir had been settled and new chapter, in the relations between Jammu and Kashmir and New Delhi, had started. But despite this announcement the Congress continued its opposition to the Sheikh and the demand for full representation in the Cabinet was raised loudly. During this period Syed Mir Qasim was included in the Union Cabinet and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was not consulted at all which widened the gap between the Congress and the National Conference. The Congress President, accompanied by Syed Mir Qasim, arrived in Srinagar on June 15, 1976 and held talks with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah but nothing came out of these detailed talks. After this, some central Ministers including Mr. Swaran Singh and Mr. Om Mehta came to Srinagar to resolve the crisis between the Congress and the National Conference. On July 14, 1976 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to Delhi to hold talks on this issue but nothing could be settled. Mrs. Gandhi sent Mr. Parthasarthy to the Srinagar where he had talks with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his lieutenant Mr. Beg but the National Conference remained adamant and announced that the State Government will hold civic elections for which it would have no truck with the Congress.

On August 26, 1976 those 10 members, who had resigned from the Congress, announced that they had joined the National Conference. This announcement was made at a public meeting in Sheri Kashmir Park in Srinagar which was attended by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah also. This step was treated as conspiracy by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah against the Congress and this did not create any good impression in New Delhi.

The Sheikh ordered elections to the Municipal Committees and the Town Area Committees. The elections were to be held in October and the National Conference started preparations for them. As per the programme the nomination papers had to be filed by September 29, 1976.

During this time, on September 10, 1976, a plane of the Indian Airlines was hijacked. The plane which had reached New Delhi from Srinagar and from there it was on its way to Jaipur was hijacked to Lahore. It was hijacked by those Kashmiri youngmen who continued their struggle against India and the names of the hijackers were Mohammad Rafiq, Ghulam Hassan Rather, Abdul Rashid Sopiani, Ghulam Nabi Yatu, Ghulam Rasul Hajam and Abdul Hamid Dewani (Group leader). Their aim was to carry the plane either to Libya or to Saudi Arabia. But the pilot feigned that he had run short of fuel and the hijackers directed him to carry it to Lahore with the hope to refuel the plane there. But the Pakistan Government seized the plane and arrested the hijackers.

Meanwhile the preparations for the civic elections were on in Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah disagreed, in spite the pressure from the Centre and the State Congress, to postpone these elections, and on October 4, 1976 a notification was issued which said that the civic elections would be held in the third week of October 1976. In this connection the President All India Congress Committee, Mr. D.K. Baruah, arrived in Srinagar, on October 10, 1976 and asked the Chief Minister, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah not to hold the civic elections. When there was no result of these talks he invited Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to New

Delhi and some Congress leaders too were summoned. On October 17, 1976 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah reached Delhi where he had talks with Congress leaders and on the advice of Mrs. Gandhi, he agreed to expand his Cabinet. On his return he announced in Srinagar on October 21, the expansion elevating Mr. Ali Mohammad Naik, Mr. Abdul Gani Goni, Mr. Mangat Ram and Sardar Rangil Singh, all from Congress, to the rank of Cabinet Ministers and the Sheikh also appointed three of the 10 members, who had resigned from the Congress and joined the National Conference, as Deputy Ministers. They were Abdul Gani Mir, Mohammad Ashraf Khan and Mohammad Shafi. This again annoyed Congressmen who complained to Mrs. Gandhi that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was trying to weaken the Congress by encouraging defectors and including them in his Ministry. Mrs. Gandhi directed the Congressmen, who were to be inducted in the Cabinet not to take the oath and this brought anxiety to the National Conference leadership because Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had even announced the portfolios of these Ministers. The oath taking ceremony was fixed for October 25, 1976. When Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah accompanied by Mr. G.M. Shah, Mr. M.K. Tickoo and Mr. G.M. Kochak, who also were upgraded and appointed Cabinet Ministers and other newly appointed National Conference Deputy Ministers, reached Raj Bhawan and met the Governor who informed him that Congressmen, who had been appointed Cabinet Ministers, had decided not to take the oath and boycott the ceremony. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah suggested to the Governor to administer the oath to the National Conference Ministers only. This suggestion could not go through and instead the Governor suggested a compromising

formula which was agreed to be the Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The function fixed for oath taking ceremony was started one hour late and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah arrived in the function with the Governor. The Governor's face was full of confidence and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, with a fallen face and in a sad tone came to the mike and read out a statement, in which he announced that on the advice of the Governor the oath taking ceremony was being cancelled and the programme finalised for holding civic elections, too had been cancelled for the sake of maintaining the accord with the Congress. On this dramatic and unexpected announcement of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg who came to newsmen, and said :

توہی خبر گرم کہ غالب نے آئیں گے پرزے
دیکھتے ہم بھی گئے پر وہ تماشا نہ ہوا

In reality Mr. Beg could not compromise on seeing Mr. Ghulam Nabi Kochak, an opponent and Mr. G.M. Shah being appointed as Cabinet Ministers. And when the matter of expansion of ministry was dropped Mr. Beg was the most happy person. A day later Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah sent a bouquet of saffron flowers and Diwali greeting to Mrs. Gandhi. On November 2, 1976, Mr. Beg was sent to New Delhi to assure the Centre that the National Conference leadership was fully loyal to India. Mr. Beg also assured Mrs. Gandhi that the National Conference will support the Centre's move to bring forth an amendment in the constitution though the amendment would effect the aim of Article 370 and the powers and concessions derived from this by Jammu and Kashmir. The National Conference leadership had become helpless.

and in this state of helplessness it was trying to divert the attention of people towards development works. But the wave of public criticism, anger and anxiety, against the National Conference Government, went on spreading because it felt that the State Government had become subservient to the directions and dictations from the Centre. The State Government had no assessment of the situation relating to growing opposition to Mrs. Gandhi within the party which could erupt anytime. And the way voices of people had been trampled by the internal emergency could not continue for long.

The Indian Public had strange reaction to Mr. Bhutto's announcement of January 7, 1977 in which he said that elections to the National Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies would be held on March 7, 1977 in the Pakistan before the expiry of his term. It was so because by imposing internal emergency Mrs. Gandhi had curbed all democratic rights of the people in India. Without noticing the changing political situation in the country the National Conference tried its level best to appease the Indian Prime Minister and keep its accord with the State Congress intact.

On January 15, 1977 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah left Jammu for New Delhi and after his talks there went to Calcutta. In the meantime Mrs. Gandhi dramatically announced, in a Radio broadcast on January 18, 1977, dissolution of the Lok Sabha to be followed by fresh elections in March 1977. She also decided to release all opposition leaders and lift censorship on newspapers. The Jammu and Kashmir Congress leaders demanded holding of the Assembly elections alongwith the Lok Sabha elections. when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah came to know of this demand,

he cut short his West Bengal tour and rushed back to New Delhi to hold talks with Mrs. Gandhi, Syed Mir Qasim, Congress President and Mr. Om Mehta in this connection. Even while being in New Delhi Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah could not assess the changing situation and that too when Mr. Jagjivan Ram a Union Minister, resigned from the Cabinet and joined the opposition camp alongwith his supporters. On the advice of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Mrs. Gandhi turned down the demand of the State Congress for holding Assembly elections along with the Lok Sabha elections. After seeking this assurance Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah returned to Jammu where he told newsmen that the matter of seat adjustment for Lok Sabha poll between the Congress and the National Conference, had been settled with Mrs. Gandhi and there will be no contest between the two parties in the election field. He also advised the opposition parties in India to keep off from Jammu and Kashmir because no political upheaval could be tolerated in the State. It had been decided with Mrs. Gandhi that out of the six Lok Sabha seats in Jammu and Kashmir State, the National Conference will put up its candidates on Srinagar, Baramulla and Jammu seats and the Congress will contest from Islamabad, Udhampur and Ladakh constituencies. Accordingly Begum S.M. Abdullah, Abdul Ahad Vakil and Balraj Puri were the National Conference candidates from Srinagar, Baramulla and Jammu seats respectively and the Congress nominated Dr. Karan Singh, Mohammad Shafi Qureshi and Smt. Parvati Devi from Udhampur, Islamabad and Ladakh constituencies respectively. The National Conference assured the Congress of its support for these seats.

People in the Valley were quite unhappy over this

"bargain" and their resentment was felt when Begum Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was given a cold shoulder treatment on her arrival in Srinagar from Jammu by an aeroplane. In the beginning the National Conference leadership wanted to secure the Srinagar and Baramulla seats un-contested and if it was not possible atleast to get the Srinagar seat without a contest. This desire could not be fulfilled when Moulvi Iftikar Hussain, a Congress member of the Legislative Council, and a Jamat-i-Islami candidate, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, entered the election field from Srinagar and Baramulla constituencies respectively. Mr. Geelani was in jail. Their decision to contest stood despite pressure tactics and intimidation adopted by the National Conference. When the poll campaign warmed up the amendment to the Land Grant Bill became a matter of debate and this unnerved the National Conference leadership. It may be recalled that the Land Grant Bill had been adopted by Maharaja Hari Singh in 1927. Under this Act no outsider could purchase land in Jammu and Kashmir. After 1947 various amendments had been made in the Act which empowered outsiders to have land and other property on lease for 10 or 20 years only. But the Sheikh Government wanted to make an amendment in this Act so that any individual, institution or organisation could secure any property or land on lease for 100 years. When the amendment to the Act was moved in the Assembly some members loudly objected to it and it was referred to a Select Committee.

The reports of peoples' opposition to the National Conference in the election battle-field continued to be received which forced Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to come to Srinagar on March 1, 1977. In Srinagar he addressed an election rally in Sher i-Kashmir Park where

he contradicted the allegations of foisting family rule, amassing property and moving amendment to the Land Grants Act. He appealed to voters to vote for Begum Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. He asked his followers how they were tolerating critical allegations against the self of the Sheikh? Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah also addressed an election meeting at Baramulla and his speeches created tension. The situation deteriorated and in some areas section 144 was imposed. Number of people were arrested and it was made difficult for the opposition to hold even an election meeting. In this election also the ruling party, in collaboration with the election machinery, resorted to certain malpractices and some incidents of excesses left the people dismayed. Opposition was greatly harrassed in Srinagar and Baramulla constituencies but it was all peaceful in Islamabad constituency where there was no National Conference candidate in the field. The National Conference candidates won from Srinagar and Baramulla but its candidate from Jammu lost miserably. Though the Congress bagged the Udhampur and Islamabad seats, it faced a rout on the national level. The election results were revolting in character because not only Mrs. Gandhi lost her seat but big pillars of the Congress were defeated and this way the Congress was thrown out of power after 30 years. The power went to the Janata Party and Mr. Morarji Desai became the new Prime Minister of India.

This revolutionary change in India too had its impact on the politics of the State. Those very days the budget session of the State Assembly was on in Jammu and the Congress leaders, in view of the new situation, decided to withdraw support to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and assume power. When on

March 23, 1977 the Finance Minister, Mr. Devi Dass Thakur, presented the budget proposals in the State Assembly, the Congress members blocked it and moved a motion of adjournment of the House. In view of this uncertain situation the House was adjourned till next day. And when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah came to know that the Congress, which had majority in the Assembly, was planning to move vote of no-confidence against him in the Assembly he met the Governor and asked him to propogate the Assembly session. After this both the Chief Minister and the Governor reached Delhi and the next day the State Congress leaders too went to New Delhi where they made Mrs. Gandhi to agree on voting Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah out of power and elect Mufti Mohammad Syed, the party President, in his place. During his stay in New Delhi Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah met both Mrs. Gandhi and the new Prime Minister Mr. Morarji Desai separately and the Governor briefed the new Government in India on the political situation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. Desai refused to intervene and he favoured steps in accordance with the Constitution and democratic practices. In New Delhi the Chief Minister, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah sent a letter to the Governor in which he advised the Governor for dissolution of the State Assembly and Governor's rule in the State. The Governor consulted the Prime Minister on it and Mr. Desai advised him to go back to Jammu and perform his duties in accordance with the constitution. The Congress leaders too returned to Jammu and a meeting of the legislature party was convened on March 26, 1977. In this meeting Mufti Mohammad Syed was elected the new leader of the Party. On his return Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah issued a press statement in which he said "since the

Congress had withdrawn its support to me, therefore, the accord between me and Mrs. Gandhi should be treated as cancelled." When in the evening Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah met the Governor the latter advised him to resign and the Governor contacted the Prime Minister on telephone in the evening on March 26, 1977 and briefed him on the political situation which had developed following the withdrawal of the Congress support to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the Party's decision to elect Mufti Mohammad Syed as the new Chief Minister. The Prime Minister advised the Governor to dissolve the Assembly, on the basis of the constitutional crisis, and take up the administration in his own hands. The Governor dissolved the Assembly on March 27, 1977 and promulgated Governor's rule in the State. It was for the first time since 1947 that Governor's rule was imposed in the State. Soon after promulgation of the Governor's rule the Governor, Mr. L.K. Jha appointed Mr. S. Banerje, Chief Secretary as his adviser.

The Congress protested against imposition of Governor's rule and described it as unconstitutional. As the Srinagar was in the grip of "Sher-Bakra" trouble the imposition of Governor's rule was welcomed on the whole because the tension between the National Conference and its opponents had ended with the end of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's rule. When the National Conference tried to organise a hartal against the way Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was removed from power, it was opposed by the people in the Srinagar city. Instead number of processions were taken out in the city which welcomed the imposition of the Governor's rule.

Two days later, on March 29, 1977, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah left for New Delhi from Jammu where he had talks with Prime Minister Desai, Union Home Minister, Charan Singh, and other Janata Party leaders. A statement was issued on behalf of the two MPs, Begum Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Abdul Ahad Vakil in which the Janata Party was assured full support of the National Conference.

18

ENTRY OF JANATA

On April 2, 1977 Khwaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra announced that he had received a message from Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, founder of the Janata Party and on that basis he was joining the Janata Party. This announcement saw Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah rushing to Bombay where he met Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan. After the meeting he came to Delhi and had a meeting with Mr. Desai for an hour and a half. Mr. Beg also participated in these talks. According to Mr. Beg, the Prime Minister suggested to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to merge the National Conference with the Janata Party but the Sheikh and Mr. Beg assured him that after the elections they would be able to do so. The talks ended before reaching any settlement and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah returned to Jammu and Mr. Beg to Srinagar. Later when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah reached Srinagar, by road, he was given a warm reception by the National Conference and while addressing a public meeting at Lal Chowk he said among other things that, "although there are some of my friends in the Janata Party but I cannot hand over the destiny of Kashmiris in the hands of that party."

On April 9, 1977 Mr. A.B. Vajpayee and Mr. George Fernandes, two Central Ministers, came to

Srinagar and the next day a reception was accorded to them in the Broadway Hotel. The function was attended by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg and others. Mr. Vajpayee, who was External Affairs Minister, and Mr. Fernandes held detailed talks with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mr. Beg. For an electoral alliance and seat adjustments, the two Janata Party leaders also met Khwaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra and other opponents of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. These leaders gave an impression to Mr. Vajpayee and Mr. George Fernandes that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was not as much popular as he was two years back. Their assessment was that the National Conference headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah will not be able to win a single seat from Jammu region which had 32 seats in the State Assembly and in case of Valley as per them the National Conference would not be able to win more than 15 or 20 seats. This way the Janata Party leaders came to the conclusion that they should form their own party unit in Jammu and Kashmir and all the opponents of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were, however, brought in the Janata fold. Their assessment was that if Janata Party would win only 15 or 20 seats in the Valley, the party will be able to form the Government with the support of Jammu region MLAs. The two central leaders had their eyes on Maulana Masoodi for leading the Janata Party in Jammu and Kashmir. The Maulana had virtually been away from politics for some time and had settled at Ganderbal, 18 kms from Srinagar. People had the impression that the Maulana was a well behaved and a selfless politician who was leading a saintly life because of his disenchantment with the circumstances. In many political circles he was being viewed with respect for his political detachment and his views. He himself gave

the impression of an ailing person and above the politics.

This very time Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan who was main vital force responsible for causing revolution in the country, supported, in a statement, the idea of setting up Janata Party unit in Jammu and Kashmir. When Mr. Vajpayee and his colleague went to Ganderbal to meet Maulana Masoodi he assessed the importance of the aging leader in the first meeting. The Maulana too had been impressed by the political changes and he thought that by organising all anti-Abdullah forces in one party a political force could be formed which could face the National Conference and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Despite his experience and sound political vision Maulana Masoodi under-estimated the fact that even with the help of force, repression political relationship, temptation and regular attempts the Congress could not build its public credibility and acceptability in the Valley during its 12 years rule. When the matter of formation of the Janata Party, at the instance of the Central leaders, in Kashmir spread, its entry like the Congress, could not be welcomed by the people in the Valley. An impression developed, both in urban and rural areas of the Valley, that the Janata Party was a conglomeration of Jan Sangh and other reactionary and communal forces.

In the meantime Khwaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra, who had set up a unit of Janata Party in Kashmir on his own, went to New Delhi and Bombay to meet Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan and other central leaders. He also got Mr. Narayan's that statement published in newspapers in which the Sarvodaya leader had stated that by establishing the Janata Party in Jammu and

Kashmir the political and administrative gap between Kashmir and other parts of the country would be narrowed down. "It will bring Kashmir nearer to the country."

After this, three Janata Party leaders, Mr. Ashok Mehta, Mr. Nanaji Deshmukh and Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh, came to take stock of the political situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The situation in Kashmir was strange and all old and new political opponents of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were joining the Janata Party. Prem Nath Bazaz was one worth mentioning who had come slightly close to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in connection with the "Peoples Convention" but had later confronted the Sheikh on some personal reasons. On April 16, 1977 the three central Janata leaders were invited to a dinner hosted by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah where the matter pertaining to cooperation between the National Conference and the Janata Party was discussed. Next day I had a meeting with Mirza Afzal Beg who looked to be in the midst of some strange political conflict, at his residence. He said to me, "I wanted to resign from the Cabinet even in March last because I have maintained differences with some of the policies of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah." In this connection he referred to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's attempt to encourage family rule and malpractices during the Lok Sabha elections. The three central Janata leaders had two rounds of talks with Mirza Afzal Beg and went to Ganderbal to discuss the situation with Maulana Masoodi. On April 17, 1977 they announced, at a Press Conference, formation of the Janata Unit in the State with the appointment of 21 members to the Adhoc-Committee and Maulana Masoodi was made the Convener of the Committee.

Article 370. Temporary provisions with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir : (i) Notwithstanding anything in the Constitution—

(a) the provisions of Article 238 shall not apply in relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir ;

(b) the power of Parliament to make laws for the said State shall be limited to—

(i) those matters in the Union List and the Concurrent List which, in consultation with the Government of the State, are declared by the President to correspond to matters specified in the instrument of Accession governing the accession of the State to the Dominion of India as the matters with respect to which the Dominion Legislature may make laws for that State ; and

PART XXI. Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions—Arts. 370-371.

(ii) such other matters in the said Lists as, with the concurrence of the Government of the State, the President may by order specify.

Explanation. For the purposes of this article, the Government of the State means the person for the time being recognised by the President as the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir acting on the advice of the Council of Ministers for the time being in office under the Maharaja's Proclamation dated the fifth day of March 1948 ;

(c) the provisions of article (1) and of this article shall apply in relation to that state ;

(d) such of the other provisions of this Constitution shall apply in relation to that State subject to such exceptions and modifications as the President may by order specify ;

Provided that no such order which relates to the matters specified in the Instrument of Accession of the State referred to in paragraph (i) of sub-clause (b) shall be issued except in consultation with the Government of the State ;

Provided further that no such order which relates to matters other than those referred to in the last preceding proviso to sub-clause (d) of that clause be given before the Constituent Assembly for the purpose of framing the Constitution of the State is convened, it shall be placed before such Assembly for such decision as it may take thereon.

(3) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this article, the President may, by public notification, declare that this article shall cease to be operative or shall be operative only with such exceptions and modifications and from such date as he may specify ;

Provided that the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly of the State referred to in clause (2) shall be necessary before the President issues such a notification.

19

1977 ELECTION

The press statement of the Janata Party leaders, which they issued on their return to New Delhi, became the basis of a feeling among the people in Kashmir that the Janata Party was not in favour of continuation of the special status which the State enjoyed under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Prior to this, Article 370 of the Indian Constitution had no special significance either in the politics of Kashmir or in the mind of the public. But the Kashmir accord and the events that followed the accord brought about some change in the political conception in Kashmir. And alongwith this the definition and meaning of Article 370 started being made in a twisted or by the National Conference leaders. It became a common belief that Kashmir's special entity existed because of this Article and if this Article was abrogated, people from outside the State would get the right of purchasing land and other property in the State. Though in reality Article 370 had no connection with such matters.

The situation started changing and the Janata Party was being viewed with dislike. Moulvi Farooq's Awami Action Committee and the Jamat-i-Islami inclined to support the Janata Party not because of any

ideal or principle but only because of the fact that these two parties wanted to weaken the political position of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, though the Awami Action Committee, till that time, had been demanding plebiscite and the right of self-determination. On the other side Janata Party leaders who assumed power at the centre, as a result of the Lok Sabha elections were completely ignorant of Kashmir's politics, its waxing and waning trends, its present scenario, its background, its political temperament and its history. Those persons who were included in the State Janata Unit were unacceptable to the people. Their political past and position was almost nil and none among them had similar views. In view of their outlook and other considerations their joining the Janata Party appeared to be a funny affair. Most of them had joined the party on the assumption that, in keeping with the tradition, they would be elected because of the support of a political party which was in power in the centre. They hoped that, as it happened in the past, this time also those very candidates would emerge successful who had the backing of the party in power at the Centre.

Since the Congress too was sceptical about its success, it started negotiations with the National Conference on matters related to electoral alliance and adjustment of seats. In this connection Syed Mir Qasim had several meetings with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mirza Afzal Beg, but no electoral alliance between the two parties could be made possible. In the midst of alliances and election campaign a youth organisation under the name of "Youth Federation" emerged dramatically on the scene in Srinagar. Majority of

the Youth, who joined the Federation, were among the supporters of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

The feeling that the new Union Government will not allow free and fair elections in the State started gripping the people. When Mr. Satarwala, a Parsi Officer from Bombay, was appointed second adviser to the Governor, it also generated the same feeling among the people that such steps were being taken to rig the elections. The Youth Federation brought back to life again the old "Sher-Bakra" conflict and this way old and new animosity, rift and bitterness became the basis for trouble. Although the situation in the Valley was not clear to some extent, opponents of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the National Conference could not succeed in winning the support of the people. These opponents lacked the knack and experience so that they could work for a united organisation instead of personal gains and victory.

On May 16, 1977 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah told a public meeting at Islamabad, "the Janata Party and her Government in the Centre wants to do away with the internal autonomy which the State of Jammu and Kashmir enjoyed under Article 370 of the Constitution and deprive it of its special entity by merging it closely with India. It has been amply revealed in the communication of Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan to Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra in which it has been stated that the gap between Kashmir and India should be now bridged, and the way Kashmir has been maintaining separate entity should not remain. This reveals the mind of the Indian leaders. Though Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan is my friend but I shall not allow him or anybody else to merge totally Kashmir with India or end its separate

entity. We will fight all such attempts with full force. The biggest aim of the movement of the National Conference was to get the people the right of deciding their future. I ask this question to the people that Nanaji Deshmukh of the Jana Sangh has become trustworthy in their eyes whereas Mirza Afzal Beg and myself are not. Maulana Masoodi and others who joined the Janata Party were party to the 1953 bloody events. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq have died but Maulana Masoodi is alive and he is still aspiring for reenacting the 1953 events. On the basis of the accession document we have given only three things to New Delhi and they are defence, foreign affairs and communications and for rest of the matters Kashmir had been kept independent. And this independence was vouchsafed in Article 370. The desire of the Janata Party is to abrogate this special position and that is why the party had suggested to the National Conference to merge with it."

While addressing the same public meeting Mirza Afzal Beg said, "the elections that are due in Kashmir are a type of plebiscite. It is your job to see whom you will vote for."

On May 23, 1977 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said at a rally of the National Conference at Mujahid Manzil, "if we do not secure a place of honour in India, we shall not hesitate to secede. Nobody from outside Kashmir is competent to decide our fate and the National Conference has proved, during every phase, that no country or outside force can decide our fate. We can have link with India only in matters pertaining to defence, foreign affairs and communications and in rest of the matters we want to remain independent. If

any attempt was made to make some changes in Article 370, the entire fabric of accession will get shaken. We are not desirous of power but power can become an instrument for achieving our goal for which we have been struggling. The Janata Party and the Congress favour total accession with India but we want to maintain our separate entity. The coming elections will settle Kashmir's fate."

On May 24, 1977 the Chief Election Commissioner announced the poll programme for Jammu and Kashmir and it asked the Governor to issue a formal notification in this connection. Under the programme the polling dates were fixed for June 30, July 2 and July 3, 1977. And on the heels of it the election scene warmed up in the entire State. The State Janata Party, Moulvi Farooq and the Jamat-i-Islami developed the feeling that the National Conference had become the centre of peoples' attention but, instead of supporting each other, they simply pinned their hopes on New Delhi that with its support they would be able to win. Maulana Masoodi, head of the State Janata Party got Moulvi Farooq to his side, though Moulvi Farooq enjoyed influence in a segment of Srinagar only and he had no other significance. The alliance between the Janata Party and Moulvi Farooq gave more teeth and power to the National Conference. In order to secure more public support Mirza Afzal Beg and other leaders told a party election meeting at Mujahid Manzil, on May 27, 1977, that the primary duty for the National Conference was to secure complete autonomy for Kashmir. If the National Conference got absolute majority in the Assembly, "we will keep only defence, foreign affairs and communications with the Centre" as was incorpora-

ted in the 1947 accession document. And "Kashmir will remain independent in rest of the matters."

In Kashmir, during these days, some new political event emerged on the scene. On May 30, 1977 one such event was the formation of "Mahaz-e-Aazadi" (Freedom Front) by Sufi Mohammad Akbar, a close associate of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who announced that his party will struggle for seeking the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir in order to settle the Kashmir problem. The formation of this party and Sufi Mohammad Akbar's announcement too proved helpful to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the National Conference and harmful for his opponents because the people were made to believe that Sufi Mohammad Akbar had revived the Plebiscite Front in the name of Mahaz-e-Aazadi at the advice of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg. This way the National Conference derived much benefit from Sufi's announcement and step. According to the election notification, issued on May 30, 1977, for Srinagar and Baramulla districts the polling date was fixed for July 2 and in case of Islamabad district it was July 3. June 5, 1977 was the last for filing the nomination papers and on that date a spokesman of the Election Commission told newsmen that for 76 seats over 600 candidates had filed their nomination papers. After scrutiny on June 7, 1977 it was announced that nomination papers of all the six hundred candidates were accepted and not a single nomination paper was rejected. It was for the first time, since 1947 that the practice of rejection the nomination papers of opponents was not adhered and for the first time people participated in the elections because the elections were being held under Governor's rule. It was neither the National

Conference Government nor that of the Congress and, therefore, it was not in the hands of the State Government to reject the nomination papers of the opponents. Since no political party was in power in the State, both the candidates and the voters enjoyed full freedom. Whenever assembly elections were held, between the period 1947 and 1977, they were undemocratic and one-sided affair. In the elections rules and norms of democracy and polling, justice and voters' rights used to be thrown to winds to facilitate only the ruling party to emerge victorious. But during the Governor's rule every candidate had freedom, voters enjoyed freedom, newspapers had freedom and all political parties had it. Despite this Srinagar had become the centre of quarrels, clashes and fear because of "Sher-Bakra" conflict. Election clashes took place at Sopore and Islamabad, too, but the situation in Srinagar was more hopeless. In the name of elections neighbour became blood thirsty of another neighbour and the happenings of beating and intimidation of political opponents became common. For supporters of one party it had become difficult to enter the area of supporters of another party.

During this phase a news about Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's heart attack suddenly spread in the city. When the news of his illness was published in a couple of local newspapers, it caused concern. In order to mitigate this concern in the public I published a news item in "Aftab" which ran like this "Sheikh Sahib's health is slightly improving". Soon after this news was published Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's special physician, Dr. Ali Mohammad Jan, told me on telephone that the news published in "Aftab" was incorrect because Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's condition was

precarious. On the doctor's information the Governor, Mr. L.K. Jha his adviser, Mr. S. Banerji, other top officials and National Conference leaders went to the residence of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The Governor informed New Delhi about Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's health condition as it was stated by his doctor, and the Union Home Minister, Mr. Charan Singh, sent two leading heart specialists to Srinagar immediately. On the advice of the Doctor the Governor made speedy arrangements for bringing back Begum Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and her son Dr. Farooq Abdullah by helicopter from Doda where they had gone in connection with the election campaign. The Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai who was in London, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee and Mrs. Indira Gandhi also sent messages of sympathy to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on his reported serious condition. These messages were broadcast from the radio and published by newspapers and this enhanced peoples' concern. Prayers for Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's health were held in mosques and on all routes and roads ram sacrifices and other "Niaz" were performed. When I went to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's residence to enquire about his health, it was disclosed that the doctor had prohibited entry into his room. The two doctors, who had come from Delhi to examine the Sheikh had left Srinagar on the second day. On June 14, 1977, I went to meet Dr. Ali Mohammed Jan to acquaint myself about Sheikh Sahib's health. The Doctor was in his drawing room and he informed me that "Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's condition was critical and he was not out of danger". He also told me that "even if the Sheikh was able to come out of the crisis, he would not be able to take any political responsibility". That very evening

the All India Radio broadcast a news that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's condition was precarious and his doctors had stated that his life was not out of danger.

On June 19, 1977 the Union Home Minister, Mr. Charan Singh, arrived in Srinagar and held talks with the Governor, top Government officials and Janata Party leaders. He also addressed an election rally in the Pologrounds, which is just a few furlongs away from the residence of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, where he bitterly criticised the Sheikh and urged people to vote for the Janata Party. He also directed the Government machinery to help the Janata Party to win the elections. There was sharp reaction in the public against his speech and that too when, during his stay in Srinagar, he did not visit Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's residence to enquire about his health. Two days later the Defence Minister, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, came to Srinagar and while addressing an election meeting at the same place he referred to the illness of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. He said that "since Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was old and ill he should retire from politics" (though Mr. Jagjivan Ram himself is older than Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah). Those people who had some sort of sympathy with the Janata Party too felt disappointed with the speeches of the central Janata Party leaders.

When there was large scale transfers and adjustment of various officers and officials, as per the instructions of the Union Home Minister, people started believing that this time also they would not be allowed to exercise their franchise freely and elect members according to their choice. The people started believing that the centre planned to enable the Janata Party to

win the elections by resorting to rigging and other malpractices. This was followed by arrests of National Conference workers in Srinagar and other areas of the Valley.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai, came to Kashmir on June 25, 1977 and addressed about a dozen election meetings in the Valley. During his stay in Srinagar the Governor hosted a dinner in his honour where some Janata leaders and Moulvi Farooq too were invited. At the dinner Moulvi Farooq invited Mr. Desai to dinner at his place, the Mirwaiz Manzil, which the Prime Minister accepted. On the next day Mr. Desai addressed an election rally in the plogrounds where he criticised the National Conference and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. He also did not go to the Sheikh's residence to enquire about his health but instead he went to the Mirwaiz Manzil on the same evening he addressed the Pologround rally. In the history of the Mirwaiz Manzil it was the first occasion that an Indian Prime Minister had visited that place.

The Sheikh was bed-ridden and the Janata Party, the Congress and the Jamat-i-Islami were making Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah the target of their criticism during the election campaign which was warming up. This had its reaction in different direction and the National Conference had started gaining more political energy. Before leaving for Delhi the Prime Minister addressed a news conference in the Raj Bhawan. Though the elections were not yet over the Prime Minister had announced at the Press Conference, "the election results in Kashmir will enable the Janata Party to form the Government and the Janata Government will appoint a Commission of inquiry against Sheikh Mohammad

Abdullah, head of the former Government." When a newsman asked Mr. Desai, "who will appoint the Commission if the National Conference emerged successful in the elections?" Mr. Desai replied, "the question of the National Conference winning the elections does not arise." He also told a questioner that the slogan of plebiscite was dead for ever and its question did not arise at all. The statement of Mr. Desai had no favourable reaction in the public and people started pondering over the way the Janata Party was announcing its victory even before the polling was held. They felt that perhaps the Janata Party had made up its mind not to allow the people to elect their representatives. All these matters brought great advantage to the National Conference and the voters started getting adamant that they would cast their votes at any cost and vote according to their choice.

Prior to these events Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's political position had weakened because of the dissolution of the Plebiscite Front and deviation from the goal of right of self-determination. The National Conference Leaders themselves were acceptal about their victory in the elections. The situation did not look to be quite favourable for them in the beginning and to avoid defeat the National Conference had pondered over the question of boycotting the elections. But the situation had taken a dramatic turn only within two weeks and the political atmosphere was in their favour.

On the other hand in Pakistan political upheaval and massive agitation against Mr. Z.A. Bhutto had developed a spirit of dismay among the people in Kashmir. The developments in Pakistan had their impact on the thinking and political approach of the

people in the Valley. As the polling dates drew nearer the news about reported critical condition of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah too rapidly spread far and wide. On 30th June, 1977 Sheikh's elder son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, while speaking at a public gathering near Lal Chowk, said "Sheikh Sahib zindagi aur moat ki kashmakash main hain aur aap aapas main lad rahe hain" (Sheikh Sahib is struggling between life and death and you are quarrelling with one another). People were moved by the speech of Dr. Farooq. Other circles close to the Sheikh too would say "Sheikh Sahib is at present struggling between life and death and it cannot be said what will happen." On July 1, 1977 it was announced that a taped message of bed-ridden Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah will be relayed at a public rally in Goalbagh. Large crowds gathered to listen to the taped voice of the Sheikh. In his tape recorded speech Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah appealed to the people to vote for the National Conference for the protection of their interests. People were also highly impressed by the two photographs of the ailing Sheikh which were published by 'Aftab'. This way the Sheikh attracted wide sympathies.

On July 2 and July 3 polling for the 42 seats in the Valley was held and the general opinion said that the voter had to choose between the ailing and bed-ridden Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the unknown, least popular and third rate candidates of the Janata Party, the Congress and the Jamat-i-Islami, who all had sympathies of New Delhi and this way the voters did not even bother to know the names of the National Conference candidates. In fact they did not vote for the National Conference candidates but for Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and against the candidates spon-

sored and paternised by New Delhi. In the Election Battle the National Conference candidates were being opposed by several candidates belonging to four to five political parties besides the independent candidates. The candidates belonging to the Janata Party. The Congress and Jamat-i-Islami and others were worth mentioning. This way the Anti-Sheikh votes were divided and on the basis of this split in Anti-Abdullah voted the National Conference candidates won the battle. When the first result of Pattern Constituency was announced in favour of the National Conference candidates, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah dramatically appeared in the verandah of his residence to accept the greetings of the group of National Conference Workers gathered outside his residence. In the Election the National Conference had won 39 out of 42 seats in the Valley and in Jammu Region out of 32 seats, 14 went to the Janata Party, 11 to Congress and 7 to National Conference. The seven seats won by the National Conference in Jammu Region were from the muslim majority constituencies. The Congress was completely routed and its President, Mufti Mohammad Sayed, too had lost. The Janata Party was able to win from only two constituencies, Safa Kadal and Handwara. From Safa Kadal Mr. Abdul Rashid Kabuli won by a narrow margin because of the support from Moulvi Farooq whose supporters were in majority in the area. Mr. Abdul Gani Lone, a formal education minister, was able to win from Handwara seat because of his personal influence and great efforts. The lone Jamat-i-Islami candidate Sayed Ali Shah Geelani was able to win from Sopore by a margin of only 33 votes. It was because of his personal influence and hard work.

Only two days after the Election results, Sheikh

Mohammad Abdullah addressed, on July 7, 1977, a huge victory rally in the Polo ground which was organised by the National Conference. The Sheikh paid tributes to people for having voted the National Conference to power. That very day he sent a communication to the Union Minister, Mr. Charan Singh, in which he assured the Central Janata Government that the "National Conference Government in Kashmir will fully cooperate with the Central Government in building India as per the dreams of Mahatama Gandhi." And on July 8, 1977 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was elected Leader of the Party at a meeting of the newly elected members of the National Conference. The same day he went to Hazratbal Shrine to offer prayers. That very evening, the Sheikh informed the Governor of the decision. Subsequently the Governor invited him to form the Ministry. On July 9, 1977 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah alongwith his some new appointed Ministers was administered the oath and he again became the Chief Minister of the State. After few days he expanded his Ministry and twenty four out of forty eight National Conference MLA's were appointed Ministers, Minister of State and Deputy Minister. It was the biggest Ministry of the State Overhead.